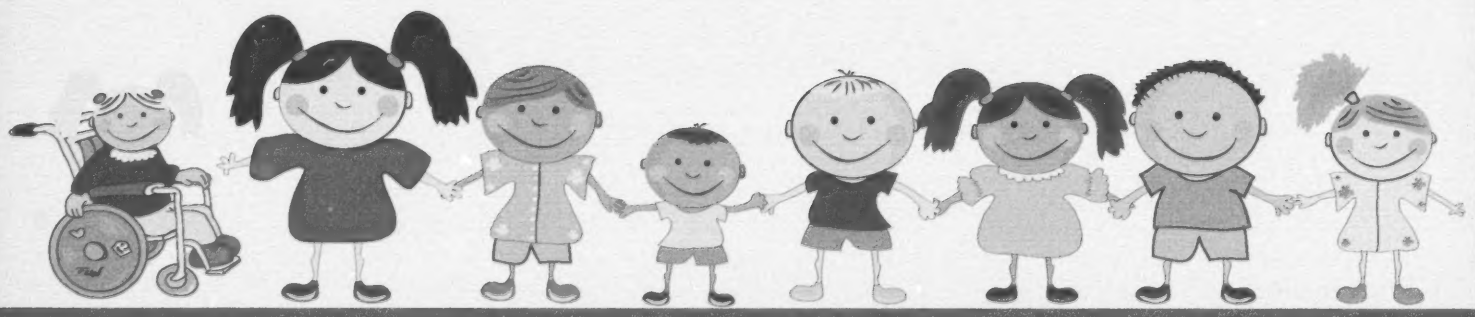
REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

2013/14 Annual Report
and
2014/15 to 2015/16 Service Plan



September 25, 2014

The Honourable Linda Reid
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Suite 207, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Dear Ms. Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present the *2013/14 Annual Report and the 2014/15 to 2015/16 Service Plan* of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to the Legislative Assembly.

This document reports on the period April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 and covers activities underway and planned for the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2016, and has been prepared in accordance with part 5, sections 17 and 19 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act.*

Yours sincerely,

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
Representative for Children and Youth
Province of British Columbia

pc: Mr. Craig James
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Ms. Jane Thornthwaite, MLA
Chair, Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Contents

Message from the Representative 2

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth 4
- About the Representative 4
- Representative's Strategic Framework 5
- Representative's Office - Organization and Staff 10

The Context for the Representative's Work 12
- Vulnerable Children and Youth 12
- Focus on Aboriginal Children and Youth 14

Program Overview, Highlights and Planned Activities 15
- Critical Injuries and Deaths – Reviews and Investigations 15
- Research, Evaluation, Audit and Monitoring 21
- Advocacy 25
- Community Relations and Outreach 34
- Communications 38
- Youth Engagement 40
- Aboriginal Relations 41
- Corporate Services 43

Our Performance 45
- Relevance 45
- Responsiveness 47
- Accountability 49
- Excellence 49

Auditor's Report 53

Appendix 1 – List of Outreach and Communication Activities 58

Contact Information 64

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Message from the Representative

As evident in the pages of this *Annual Report and Service Plan*, 2013/14 was an extremely busy year for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. Among many initiatives, we significantly expanded our Advocacy mandate, followed through on a campaign to make post-secondary education more accessible for children and youth formerly in care, and issued a total of seven detailed reports or papers recommending key improvements to the child- and youth-serving system in British Columbia and reporting on the critical injuries and deaths review and investigation work of the Office.

In September, the Representative's Office assumed authority and responsibility to advocate for young adults with special needs and their families as they transition from children's services to those designed for adults. This important work pushed our total Advocacy caseload to more than 1,900 cases during the fiscal year and left the Office approaching 12,000 cases opened since its inception in 2007.

The Advocacy program – one of three main components in the Representative's Office – continued to help children, youth and their families with advice, information and assistance as they navigate the often complex system of services in this province while also advocating for larger, systemic improvements within that overall system. Our advocates work out of three offices in B.C. – in Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George – serving youth and their families across the province.

A major focus for 2013/14 was to create awareness of the Representative's new mandate. That focus will continue in 2014/15 and beyond as the Office reaches out to nearly 4,000 young adults in B.C. now potentially eligible for our services. To that end, and to raise more general awareness about the Representative's Office and its services, the Advocacy program completed a community relations tour of 25 communities across B.C. beginning in January 2013, to connect with organizations involved in working with vulnerable children and youth and with young adults eligible for the Representative's Advocacy services. Going forward, the plan for the 2014/15 fiscal year calls for a similar tour to meet with the Aboriginal children and youth served by B.C.'s 23 delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs).

The Representative's Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations program (CID) continued to conduct reviews and undertake investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services. We conduct this important function in order to ensure that lessons are learned – to identify shortfalls in the child- and youth-serving system and make recommendations to improve services and prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.

In 2013/14, the Representative issued two such reports – a Special Report detailing why a young Aboriginal girl was subjected to neglect and abuse after moving from the care of the B.C. government to the care of her maternal grandfather in Saskatchewan; the other a CID investigation into the tragic suicide of a 14-year-old girl in a rural B.C. First Nations community and the role that a lack of appropriate and effective services and unaddressed severe parental mental illness played in her case.

Our Monitoring program, meanwhile, continued to undertake research and review government-funded services to children and youth. In 2013/14, the Representative issued a Monitoring report on the

experiences of B.C. youth and their families as they attempted to access mental health services in the province and made a number of recommendations for improving that system of services.

As part of the work in our three main program areas, the Representative's Office continued to place a major focus on Aboriginal children and youth and their families, advocating for better services for this cohort, which is dramatically over-represented in the B.C. child welfare system. Among those efforts was the release of a Special Report offering a detailed analysis of the major Aboriginal change initiatives pursued by the B.C. government since 2001 and the effect spending on those initiatives has had on direct services to Aboriginal children, youth and their families. This report identified that a misplaced focus on governance issues has resulted in a lack of resources being dedicated to actual services for Aboriginal children and youth and made recommendations on how this can be avoided going forward. We will continue to maintain a strong emphasis on Aboriginal children and youth in B.C. as the Office moves forward.

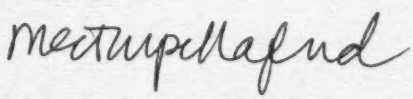
While many of the Representative's reports point out deficiencies in the system and make recommendations on how these deficiencies should be addressed, the Office is also focused on forward-looking initiatives. In June of 2013, I began a concerted campaign to increase access to post-secondary education for former children and youth in care. I'm very proud to report that, as of the writing of this message, seven post-secondary institutions in B.C. have now implemented tuition-waiver programs for former children and youth in care with more expected to follow suit. In addition, spearheaded by the leadership of Coast Capital Savings, our Office has helped initiate a fund to assist in covering the living expenses of former children in care while they are attending post-secondary.

The Representative's Office also looks forward to advising and assisting the Ministry of Children and Family Development as it creates an annual public awareness campaign about adoption, with the goal of dramatically increasing the adoption rates of children and youth in government care. This campaign stems out of work on an adoptions report that has been a focus of the Representative's Office for the last two years.

As the Office has done since its inception, we will continue to stress the importance of and push for improvements in quality assurance and reporting by MCFD. Only accurate measurements of performance combined with timely reporting of that performance will bring about the necessary improvements and provide British Columbians with confidence that the system is adequately serving and protecting its most vulnerable citizens. There is still much work to be done in these areas and we will be watching.

This document outlines the approach to meeting my accountability to the public and the Legislature to report on the activities of my Office and plans for future years. It describes the activities of the Office during 2013/14 as well as outlines our planned strategic initiatives for 2014/15 and 2015/16. We provide a full and comprehensive picture of the Office's accomplishments over the past reporting period, our plans for future years and how our work to achieve our mandate, vision and goals will be measured.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, *Representative for Children and Youth*
September 2014

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

About the Representative

The position of Representative for Children and Youth was established in April 2007 with the proclamation of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act (RCY Act)*. The creation of a Representative was a central recommendation of the Hon. Ted Hughes in his April 2006 *BC Child and Youth Review: An Independent Review of BC's Child Protection System* (Hughes Review).

The Representative is responsible for supporting children, youth, young adults and their families who need help in dealing with the child- and youth-serving system, for advocating for improvements to the system and for providing oversight of MCFD and other public bodies that deliver services and programs to children and youth.

The Representative

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond was appointed to a five-year term as B.C.'s first Representative for Children and Youth in November 2006 and reappointed in November 2011 to a second term extending to Nov. 15, 2016.

Turpel-Lafond's career has focused on the well-being of vulnerable children and youth.

She is a judge on leave from the Saskatchewan Provincial Court where she worked as a criminal law judge in youth and adult courts, with an emphasis on developing partnerships to better serve the needs of young people in the justice system.

She holds a doctorate of law from Harvard Law School and a master's degree in international law from Cambridge University.

A member of Saskatchewan's Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Turpel-Lafond and her husband George Lafond have four children.

Representative's Strategic Framework

The legislated mandate, and the vision, goals, principles, values and outcomes establish the guiding framework for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.

The mandate, vision and goals establish the Representative's focus, while the principles, values and intended outcomes set the foundation for how the Office undertakes its work, measures its performance and is accountable to the Legislature and the citizens of B.C. for meeting its responsibility to advocate for children and youth and provide independent oversight to the child- and youth-serving system.

Representative's Mandate

The Representative for Children and Youth has a three-fold mandate:

- *Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations* – conducting reviews and undertaking investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services to identify and make recommendations for improvements to services to prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.

- *Advocacy* – providing information, advice and assistance to children, youth, young adults and their families who need help in dealing with designated or prescribed services or programs provided or funded by government, and promoting and facilitating the development of advocacy services within communities.

- *Monitoring* – undertaking research, review, evaluation and audit of government-funded services and programs to identify and make recommendations for change to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of these services.

Reviewable services are services provided under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCS Act)* and the *Youth Justice Act*; mental health and addiction services for children; and additional designated services which include but are not limited to family support, adoption, guardianship, services for children and youth with disabilities, early childhood development and child care services and services for youth in their transition to adulthood.

Representative's Mandate (*RCY Act*, s. 6)

6 (1) The representative is responsible for performing the following functions in accordance with this Act:

(a) support, assist, inform and advise children and their families respecting designated services, which activities include, without limitation,

(i) providing information and advice to children and their families about how to effectively access designated services and how to become effective self advocates with respect to those services,

(ii) advocating on behalf of a child receiving or eligible to receive a designated service, and

(iii) supporting, promoting in communities and commenting publicly on advocacy services for children and their families with respect to designated services;

(a.1) support, assist, inform and advise young adults and their families respecting prescribed services and programs, which activities include, without limitation,

(i) providing information and advice to young adults and their families about how to effectively access prescribed services and programs and how to become effective self advocates with respect to those services and programs,

(ii) advocating on behalf of a young adult receiving or eligible to receive a prescribed service or program, and

(iii) supporting, promoting in communities and commenting publicly on advocacy services for young adults and their families with respect to services;

(b) monitor, review, audit and conduct research on the provision of a designated service by a public body or director for the purpose of making recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of that service, and comment publicly on any of these functions;

(c) review, investigate and report on the critical injuries and deaths of children as set out in Part 4;

(d) perform any other prescribed functions.

(2) In this section, "young adult" means a person who

(a) is 19 years of age or older but is under 24 years of age, and

(b) received a reviewable service within 15 months before the person's 19th birthday.

Representative's Mandate for advocacy to young adults and their families (Children and Youth Regulation, s. 4.1)

For the purposes of s. 6 (1) (a.1) of the Act, community living support under the *Community Living Authority Act* is prescribed. (B.C. Reg. 156/2013)

Representative's Vision, Goals and Values

Representative's Vision

In achieving its mandate, the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth strives to achieve the following vision:

> *An organization highly valued for championing the fundamental rights of children and youth and for promoting improvements in services that result in better lives for vulnerable children and youth.*

Representative's Goals

1. Advocacy supports vulnerable children, youth and young adults in having their rights and interests protected and upheld, their voices heard and considered, and in being active participants in decisions affecting them.
2. The identification of opportunities for strengthening the child- and youth-serving system improves outcomes for vulnerable children and youth and the quality of services provided to them.
3. The examination of critical injuries and deaths contributes to ensuring that children and youth are safe from violence, abuse and neglect, and exposure to violence.
4. Effective operations and practices and an expert, competent and diverse staff enhance the capacity of the Office to meet its mandate.

Representative's Approach

Principles

The Office of the Representative is governed by the following principles:

- *Independence* – the independence of the Representative is enshrined in the *RCY Act* that establishes the Representative as an independent officer of the Legislature. The Representative and her staff ensure and maintain this independence by carrying out their duties and functions in an open, objective and impartial manner using an evaluative and evidence-based approach.
- *Accountability* – the Representative is accountable to British Columbians for the performance of her responsibilities and duties in advocating for children, youth and young adults and for providing oversight to the child- and youth-serving system. The Representative reports publicly and to the Legislature through the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY). The Representative's *Annual Report and Service Plan* is received and reviewed by the SSCCY, and the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services reviews the Representative's Office budget and approves funding for the Office on an annual basis.
- *Child- and Youth-Centred* – children and youth and their best interests are at the centre of the work of the Office. At its core, a child- and youth-centred focus is based on the rights and interests of children and youth being the predominant consideration in providing advocacy support and in evaluating the impact and the responsiveness and effectiveness of child- and youth-serving programs and services.

Guiding principles of the Representative's child- and youth-centred focus (consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

- Children and youth have a right to be protected and kept safe
- Children and youth are respected and valued as individuals in their own right, with their own interests and abilities
- Children and youth have the right to participate and be heard in decisions affecting them
- Children and youth have the right to reach their full potential
- All children and youth are entitled to an equal standard of care and protection and access to consistent, timely, and responsive services and supports
- Society has a collective responsibility to provide resources and services for children, youth and their families, in particular supports for vulnerable children and youth to ensure access to equal opportunities

Values

To ensure the effectiveness of the Office, the Representative and her staff meet high standards of ethical and professional conduct and are guided by the values of:

- *Respect* – through acceptance of differing views and approaches, and, in interactions with children, youth and young adults, being accessible and easy to approach, calm, helpful and empathetic;
- *Integrity* – through honest, open, trustworthy and unbiased and consistent conduct;
- *Fairness* – by ensuring that anyone impacted by the work of the Office has the opportunity to be heard and their views considered;
- *Critical Thinking* – through a measured, evaluative and evidence-based approach; and
- *Collaboration* – by working with others to build a greater understanding of the B.C. child- and youth-serving system and to identify opportunities for improvement.

Reporting and Collaboration

- *The Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY)* – the all-party committee of the Legislature recommended by the Hughes Review and established under the *RCY Act* and that is responsible for fostering awareness and understanding among legislators and the public about the B.C. child welfare system. The Representative meets regularly with the SSCCY to present her reports and discuss the activities of her Office. The SSCCY may refer a critical injury or death of a child to the Representative for investigation.
- *The Children's Forum* – recommended by the Hughes Review and established in 2007, the Forum is chaired by the Representative and composed of delegates from the Chief Coroner, the Ombudsperson, the Public Guardian and Trustee, the Provincial Health Officer and senior leaders from MCFD. The Forum offers an opportunity for discussion and collaboration on matters of common interest to improve services to vulnerable children and youth in B.C.
- *The Advisory Committee on Services to Special Needs Children and Youth* – comprised of individuals who have specialized knowledge or experience with services to children and youth with special needs, the Committee provides valuable advice to the Representative about current issues, and helps inform the Representative's reports on related matters.
- *The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates* – an alliance of the 10 provincial and territorial children's advocates from across Canada that informs governments and the public about children's rights, and the status and well-being of vulnerable children and youth on a national level.

Intended Outcomes

The Representative's Office measures its performance in meeting its mandate and achieving its vision and goals through assessing the following outcomes:

- *Relevance* – means that the Office:
  - addresses issues and areas of concern within its mandate and of interest to the Legislature and the public;
  - is aware of and reacts readily and appropriately to issues brought to its attention through its monitoring, and review and investigation activities, its liaison and collaboration with public bodies, and by legislators, stakeholders and the public;
  - produces reports that are useful to, accessible and understood by the public, stakeholders, and Legislature; and
  - makes recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of designated programs and reviewable services with the goal of improving the child- and youth-serving system.

- *Responsiveness* – means that the Office:
  - addresses requests from children, youth and young adults and their families for support, assistance, information and advice in a timely and sensitive way;
  - analyzes and takes timely and appropriate action in relation to reported critical injuries and deaths of children and youth receiving reviewable services; and
  - reaches out to children, youth and young adults and their families, the child- and youth-serving system, and communities to build awareness of the rights of children and youth and young adults and the services of the Office.
- *Accountability* – means that the Office:
  - reports regularly and in an open and transparent way about its activities to the Legislature and British Columbians; and
  - provides information on its plans, activities and performance to the SSCCY for review and scrutiny.
- *Excellence* – means that the Office meets high standards of professional and corporate conduct through:
  - a competent, ethical and diverse staff; and
  - rigorous application and compliance with established requirements in all its operations.

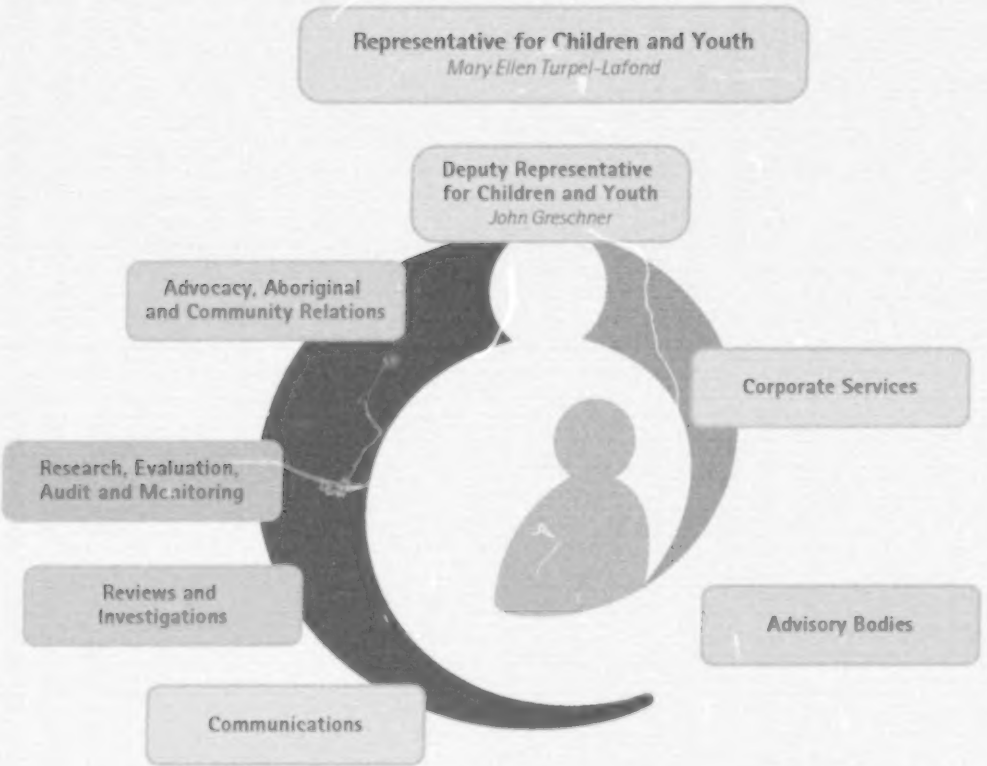
Representative's Office – Organization and Staff

The Office is organized into four program areas – Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations; Advocacy, Aboriginal and Community Relations; Research, Evaluation, Audit and Monitoring; and Corporate Services.

Services are delivered from three locations – Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George. Advocacy, Aboriginal and Community Relations staff are located in all three branch offices. Advocacy services are accessible to children, youth and young adults by phone and in person across B.C. The Victoria office, in addition to Advocacy program staff, includes the Critical Injury and Death Review and Investigation staff, the Research, Evaluation, Audit and Monitoring staff and Corporate Services staff.

The Office is staffed by a competent and diverse group of dedicated professionals. Staff represent the diversity of the population served by the Office and come from a variety of education and employment backgrounds. To support diversity, most job postings indicate that preference may be given to applicants who are of Aboriginal or Métis descent or members of ethno-cultural minority communities. Employees come from backgrounds in law, social work, education, youth justice, child and youth mental health, community-based and public sector advocacy, law enforcement and justice administration and social policy research and analysis.

Representative's Office – Organizational Structure



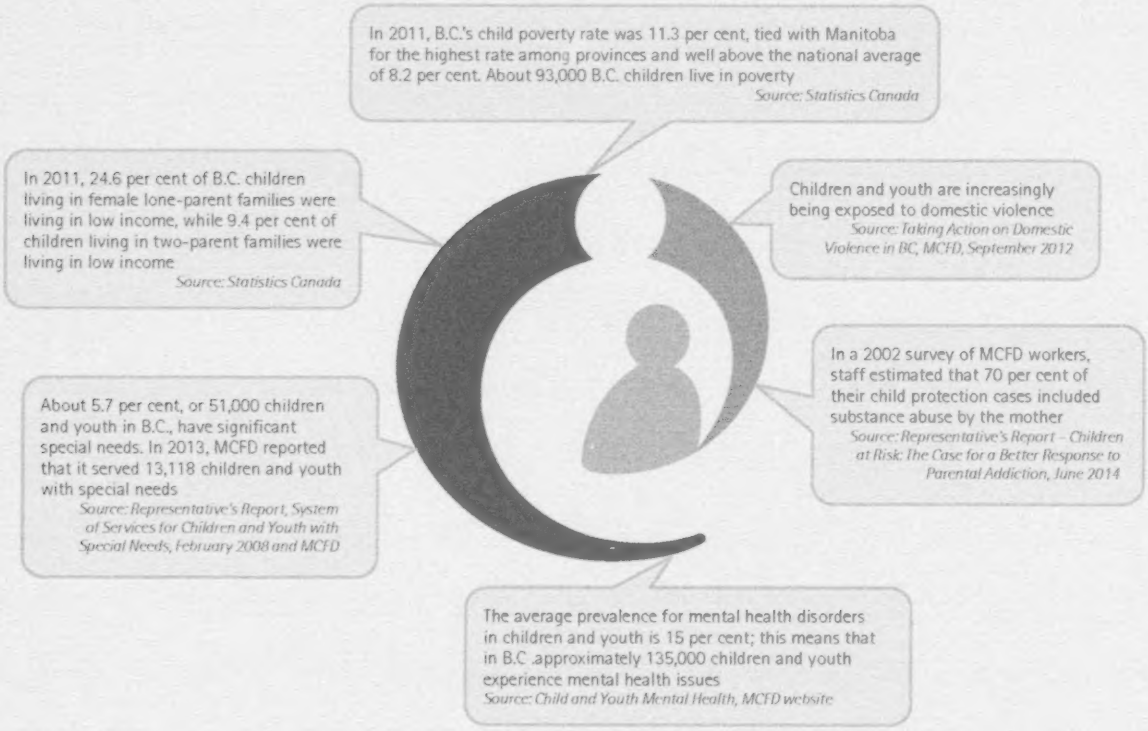
REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Context for the Representative's Work

Vulnerable Children and Youth

Most children grow up with their parents and family and are loved, well cared for and safe. However, there is a significant group of children in B.C. who are vulnerable due to their individual needs or circumstances. Some children have physical or cognitive disabilities, mental health conditions, or special needs requiring extra support and services to enable their healthy development and the achievement of their full potential. Circumstances such as living in poverty, or in an environment where they are exposed to or subject to neglect, violence, substance abuse or addictions can make children vulnerable. In some cases, government services and even intervention are required to support parents and families in caring for their children or to ensure a child's health, safety and well-being.

What the Representative is learning about the circumstances of vulnerable children ...


In 2011, B.C.'s child poverty rate was 11.3 per cent, tied with Manitoba for the highest rate among provinces and well above the national average of 8.2 per cent. About 93,000 B.C. children live in poverty
Source: Statistics Canada
In 2011, 24.6 per cent of B.C. children living in female lone-parent families were living in low income, while 9.4 per cent of children living in two-parent families were living in low income
Source: Statistics Canada
Children and youth are increasingly being exposed to domestic violence
Source: Taking Action on Domestic Violence in BC, MCFD, September 2012
About 5.7 per cent, or 51,000 children and youth in B.C., have significant special needs. In 2013, MCFD reported that it served 13,118 children and youth with special needs
Source: Representative's Report, System of Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs, February 2008 and MCFD
In a 2002 survey of MCFD workers, staff estimated that 70 per cent of their child protection cases included substance abuse by the mother
Source: Representative's Report – Children at Risk: The Case for a Better Response to Parental Addiction, June 2014
The average prevalence for mental health disorders in children and youth is 15 per cent; this means that in B.C .approximately 135,000 children and youth experience mental health issues
Source: Child and Youth Mental Health, MCFD website

In 2013, MCFD provided services and programs to 155,000 children and youth and their families[1] (about 17 per cent of the estimated 898,000 children and youth between the ages of birth and 18 years living in B.C.[2]). This includes early childhood development programs, child care support, and mental health and special needs services. MCFD is also responsible for child welfare, providing family support services, supported living arrangements for youth, and child protection services. On an annual basis, MCFD receives and responds to about 30,000 child protection reports.[3]

A particularly vulnerable group of children and youth are those who live outside the parental home, either in the care of the Province, with a caregiver supported by an MCFD or Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) program (e.g. Extended Family Program, Out of Care Options, Child in the Home of a Relative, Child Out of Parental Home Program), or youth living on their own under an MCFD Youth Agreement. In 2014, of this group of nearly 13,000 children and youth, 8,169 were in the care of the Province, including 4,170 who were under a Continuing Custody Order (CCO) with the government having permanent care and "parental" responsibility for the child.

Figure 1 – Children living out of the parental home – 2014 statistics

Children Living Outside the Parental Home*					
Children in Care	Extended Family Program	Out of Care Options (OCO)	Youth Agreements (YA)	Children in the Home of a Relative (CIHR)	Child Out of Parental Home Program (COPH)**
8,169	**362**	**431**	**695**	**1,829**	**1,500**

* Figures are March 31, 2014
** Estimated average
Source: MCFD

Children and youth in care are more likely to have poorer outcomes than the general child population in the areas of health, education and safety. There are significant gaps in educational performance and lower levels of educational achievement in children and youth in care as compared to children not in care. Children and youth in care are significantly more likely to have been exposed or subjected to violence and abuse, exhibit higher rates of risk behaviour, are more likely to have attempted suicide or committed suicide, and experience higher rates of incarceration.[4]

In 2012/13, 41 per cent of youth under a Continuing Custody Order (CCO) graduated from high school, compared to 84 per cent for all other students

Source: Ministry of Education Aboriginal Report – *How Are We Doing?* November 2013

[1] *MCFD Operational Performance and Strategic Management Report*, April to September 2013
[2] BC Stats
[3] *MCFD Operational Performance and Strategic Management Report*, April to September 2013
[4] Provincial Health Officer and Representative for Children and Youth, *Growing Up in BC*, October 2010; Representative for Children and Youth, *Kids, Crime and Care: Youth Justice Experiences and Outcomes*, February 2009.

Within six months of leaving care about 50 per cent of youth are on income assistance

The generally poorer outcomes associated with being in care extend into adulthood. Each year, about 700 youth in care reach 19 years of age, transition out of the foster care system and are on their own. Many young people leaving government care face significant struggles and are more likely to be unemployed, homeless, have mental health challenges and substance abuse issues, become parents at a young age, or have contact with the criminal justice system.[5]

Government's system of services and supports to vulnerable children and youth, especially children and youth in care, requires ongoing monitoring in order to understand how effective and responsive these services are and how they contribute to and improve the overall health and well-being of B.C.'s children and youth.

Focus on Aboriginal Children and Youth

The poor outcomes evidenced for children and youth involved in the child welfare system are more pronounced for Aboriginal children. Aboriginal children and youth in care experience lower health, education and socio-economic outcomes than their non-Aboriginal peers – a reality that is compounded by the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal children in the system.

Contrary to the general decline in the overall number of children and youth in care over the past decade or more, the number of Aboriginal children and youth in care has increased during this same period. While just over eight per cent of children and youth in B.C. are Aboriginal, as of March 2014 about 52 per cent of children and youth in care were Aboriginal and 65 per cent of children and youth in continuing custody and under the permanent guardianship of the Province were Aboriginal.

Aboriginal children are far more likely to come into contact with the child welfare system and are 7.6 times more likely to come into care than non-Aboriginal children

Source: *Aboriginal Children in Care Report*, January 2012, MCFD

The over-representation of Aboriginal children and youth in the child welfare system and the disparity in outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and youth is an area requiring special attention and consideration.

The Representative has explored and framed the key challenges for Aboriginal children and youth in several reports written over the course of her mandate. Over the past year, the Representative released three reports that scrutinized the Aboriginal child welfare system, emphasizing the necessity for extraordinary and targeted measures to address existing shortcomings, and improve child welfare outcomes for Aboriginal children, youth and their families.

[5] Representative for Children and Youth, *On Their Own: Examining the Needs of B.C. Youth as They Leave Government Care*, April 2014

Program Overview, Highlights and Planned Activities

Critical Injuries and Deaths – Reviews and Investigations

The Representative undertakes reviews of deaths and critical injuries of children and youth who had, at any time in the previous year, received reviewable services. The goal is to understand the circumstances of the injury or death and, where appropriate, make recommendations for improvements to service, practice or policy to help prevent the reoccurrence of such tragedies.

The Review and Investigation Process

The review and investigation process is multi-layered and has several steps to ensure due diligence in meeting the mandate for reviewing the deaths and critical injuries of children and youth involved in the child- and youth-serving system.

1. *Reporting:* Public bodies providing reviewable services report the critical injury or death of a child or youth receiving their services to the Representative's Office.
2. *Screening:* Each report is screened based on established criteria to determine if service-delivery issues may have been a factor in the death or critical injury. When such concerns are identified, the case becomes the subject of a more intensive review.

   In about 50 per cent of cases, no service-delivery issues are identified. These include situations where, for example, the child was medically fragile and the death was expected, or the cause was clearly accidental. Some of these cases may be flagged for inclusion in an aggregate review, which is designed to identify broad trends and patterns that can inform improvements to the child- and youth-serving system.
3. *Review:* When service-delivery issues may have been a factor in the death or critical injury, the case is reviewed to determine if it warrants a full investigation. The process is intensive and involves the analysis of information in files from the public body, which in many cases include thousands of pages, as well as any relevant files from police departments, health care providers, contracted service providers and others involved with the child or family. Case reviews may also include analysis of regional and provincial policies and standards, consultation with the B.C. Coroners Service and discussions with service providers or caregivers.

   Only a small number of cases are selected for full investigation at the Representative's discretion based on a determination that the circumstances are suspicious, the death or critical injury was self-inflicted or inflicted by someone else, evidence that abuse or neglect may have been a factor or services the child or family received may have played a part in contributing to circumstances in which the injury or death occurred.

4. *Investigation:* Carried out by a team of investigators and research analysts, a full investigation involves a thorough and rigorous examination of the system of supports up to and including the time of the death or injury. As part of an investigation, all case-related records are reviewed along with relevant legislation, policies and standards.

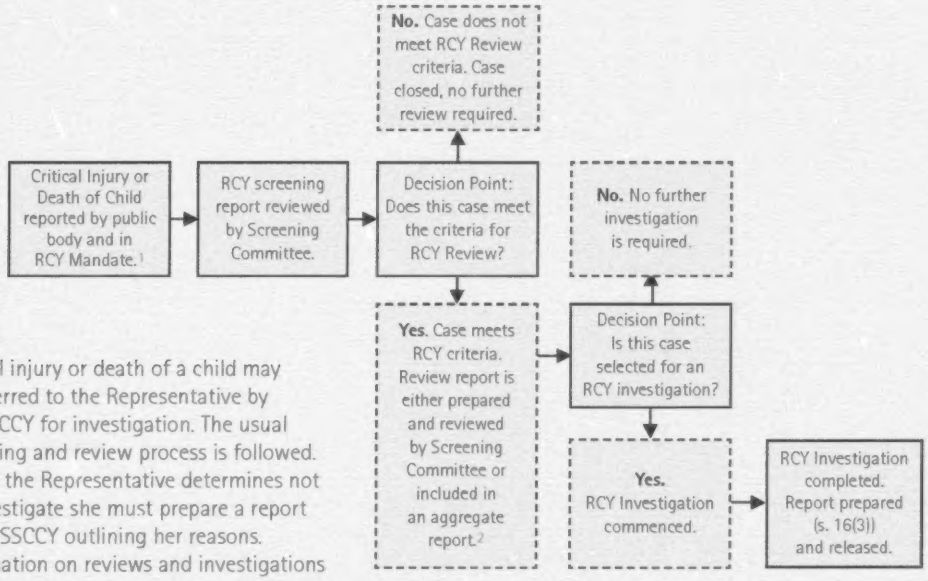
   Typically, numerous individuals are formally interviewed under oath; interviews are recorded and transcribed. Members of the child's community may also be consulted. For example, in cases involving Aboriginal children, community members and leaders are engaged to ensure that their voices are heard and that unique history and issues are taken into consideration.

   Subject matter experts may be retained when specific knowledge and expertise are needed (for example, a case involving a child with special needs or a significant medical condition).

Flowing from her review and investigation work, the Representative may, under s. 20 of the *RCY Act*, issue a special report containing recommendations. This process is different from an investigation. Special reports focus on specific findings or cases that illustrate an issue the Representative believes should be reported to the Legislature and the public.

Draft reports are reviewed by the Representative's Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). The MDT brings together a range of expertise including police services, the BC Coroners Service, the B.C. Injury Research Prevention Unit, Aboriginal child welfare leaders, pediatric medicine, and child maltreatment/child protection specialists. Following review by the MDT, the draft report is sent on a confidential basis to those organizations and individuals who have been interviewed or are otherwise affected so that they can identify errors or omissions for review for administrative fairness purposes. This input is considered in developing the final report to be publicly released.

Process Flow – Reviews and Investigations


Critical Injury or Death of Child reported by public body and in RCY Mandate.[1]
RCY screening report reviewed by Screening Committee.
Decision Point: Does this case meet the criteria for RCY Review?
No. Case does not meet RCY Review criteria. Case closed, no further review required.
No. No further investigation is required.
Yes. Case meets RCY criteria. Review report is either prepared and reviewed by Screening Committee or included in an aggregate report.[2]
Decision Point: Is this case selected for an RCY investigation?
Yes. RCY Investigation commenced.
RCY Investigation completed. Report prepared (s. 16(3)) and released.

1 Critical injury or death of a child may be referred to the Representative by the SSCCY for investigation. The usual screening and review process is followed. Where the Representative determines not to investigate she must prepare a report to the SSCCY outlining her reasons.

2 Information on reviews and investigations may be aggregated and analyzed and included in s. 16(1) report.

Summary of Activities in 2013/14

Operational Activities

The Review and Investigations program continues to streamline its internal processes to address the high volume of reportable incidents received from public bodies.

Critical Injuries and Deaths Reports, Reviews and Trends

During the period covered by this report – April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 – 99 deaths and 318 critical injuries of children and youth were reported to the Representative's Office. As shown in Figure 2 below, after their initial screening, a total of 261 cases – 32 deaths and 229 critical injuries – met the criteria for further review.

Figure 2 – Reports and Reviews 2013/14

Reports and Reviews										
	Reported to RCY					Selected for Review				
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Current 2013/14	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Current 2013/14
Critical Injuries	137	136	413	300	318	63	82	237	193	229
Deaths	93	88	101	100	99	37	34	29	32	32
Total	230	224	514	400	417	100	116	266	225	261

As illustrated in Figure 3, more than half of the 261 cases selected for review involved Aboriginal children and youth. This reflects the over-representation of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system.

Figure 3 – Further Detail on Cases Selected for Review in 2013/14

Further Detail on Cases Selected for Review				
	Critical Injuries		Deaths	
	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal
Not in Care	21	19	13	13
In Care	66	123	1	5
Total	87	142	14	18

Figures 4 and 5 detail the causes of critical injuries and deaths reviewed, as well as their gender distribution.

Figure 4 – Number of Critical Injuries by Category and Gender, 2013/14

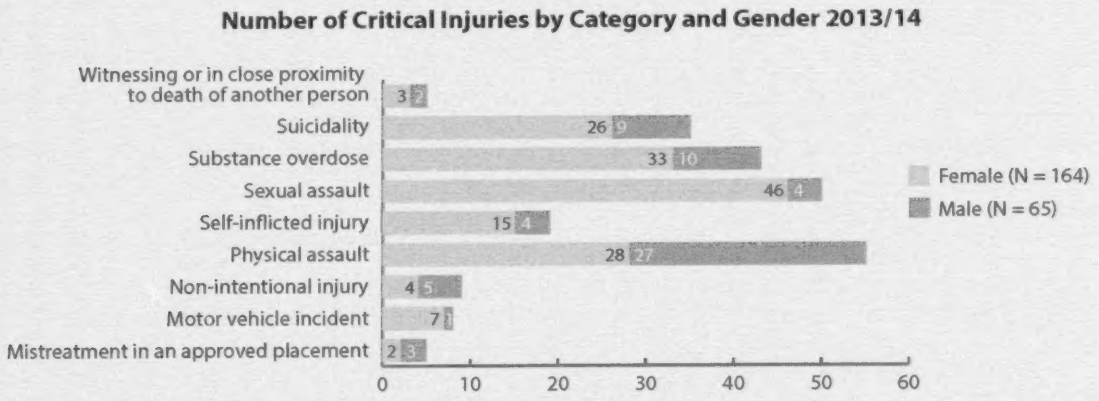
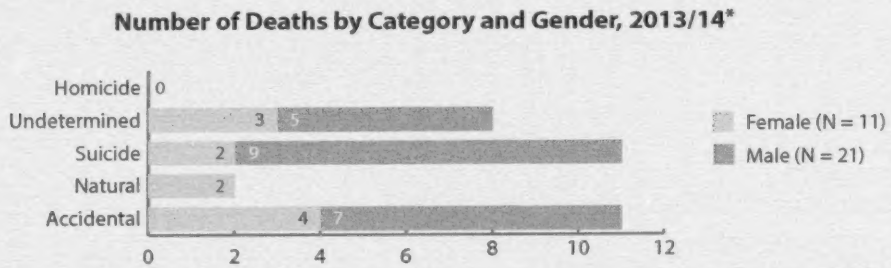


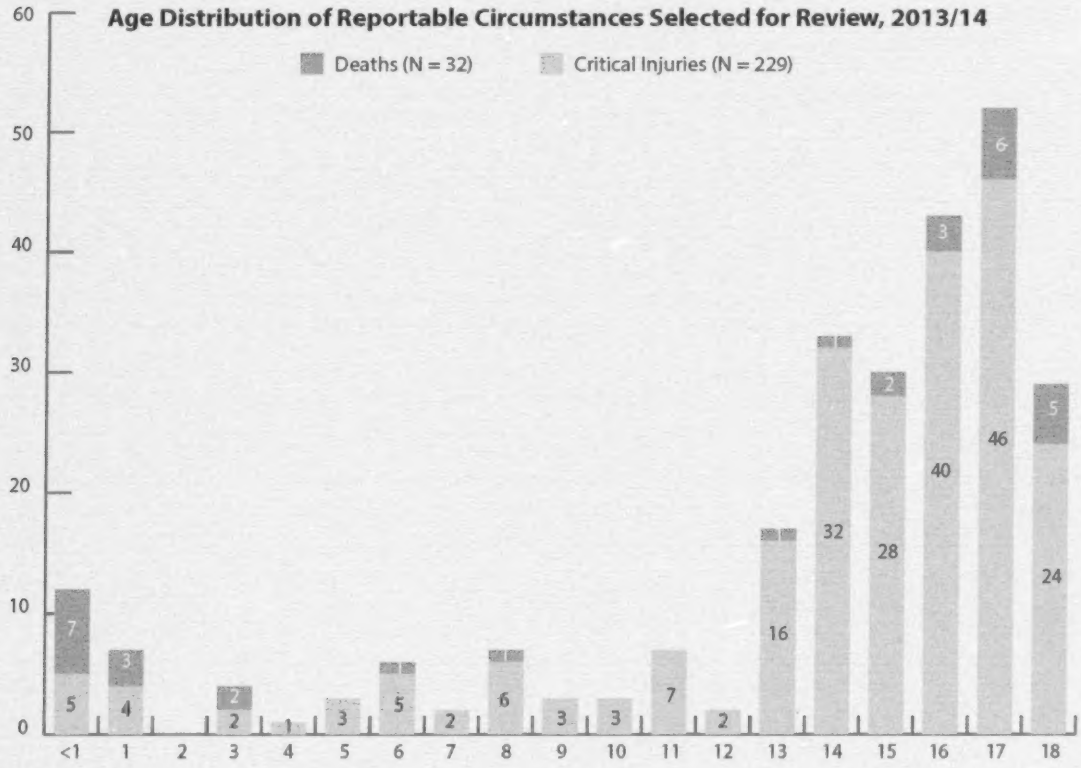
*Figure 5 - Number of Deaths by Category and Gender, 2013/14**



* Deaths are reported to the Office by the BC Coroners Service and the categories in the above table are the categories used by the Coroner.
No homicides were reported in 2013/14.

Figure 6 reflects the age distribution of cases reported and reviewed which, consistent with historical trends, indicates that most reports are related to infants and teenagers. Higher rates of injury or death in infants and teenagers are associated with the particular vulnerabilities of these groups. Infants are dependent on their caregivers and unable to defend themselves, and teenagers are prone to engage in high-risk behaviours.

Figure 6 – Age Distribution of Reportable Circumstances Selected for Review, 2013/14



Investigations and Special Reports in 2013/14

Sept. 17, 2013, Special Report – *Out of Sight: How One Aboriginal Child's Best Interests Were Lost Between Two Provinces*

This special report examined the circumstances of a young Aboriginal girl who was subject to abuse and neglect after moving from the care of the B.C. government to the care of her maternal grandfather in Saskatchewan. This report was unusual in that it required a detailed assessment of child welfare practice in two provinces to fully understand how the transfer of custody occurred. Because the Representative's statutory authority does not extend outside B.C., a conventional investigation would not have been possible.

The Representative recommended that MCFD review its policies and standards for out-of-province placements and that the Provincial Director of Child Welfare should lead a review of the current Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children and Families Moving Between Provinces and Territories to ensure placement decisions supported the needs of children.

Feb. 6, 2014 – *Lost in the Shadows: How a Lack of Help Meant a Loss of Hope for One First Nations Girl*

This investigation examined the tragic suicide death of a 14-year-old girl living in a rural B.C. First Nations community. It showed a child protection system that was not identifying and responding to an extremely vulnerable child. The situation was exacerbated by chronic staff shortages in the local MCFD office and the failure of medical professionals to recognize the risk that the mother's untreated mental illness posed to the girl.

Recommendations in this report focused on removing barriers to child welfare services in rural areas, providing effective CYMH services and special needs services, particularly to Aboriginal youth, and reinforcing the reporting responsibility when a child may be in need of protection. The report also recommended that MCFD undertake a comprehensive assessment of its staffing, workload and safety challenges.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2014/15 and 2015/16

For 2014/2015, two aggregate reviews are underway: one of youth experiences in group home settings and the other on the sexual victimization of children and youth receiving reviewable services.

The review of group homes is examining factors relating to children and youth who reside in such homes and to the operation of group homes, as well as the monitoring and oversight of those resources by MCFD. The review of sexual victimization is examining the circumstances of children and youth who are victims of sexual assault while in the care of MCFD or while receiving reviewable services, as well as the identification of risk factors for sexual assault and the systemic response to these crimes.

Two investigations are currently underway: one focusing on the circumstances of a young girl who came to the attention of the Representative after nearly dying from a drug overdose in a large urban centre, and the other related to the life trajectory of a young Aboriginal woman who died shortly after aging out of care.

Research, Evaluation, Audit and Monitoring

The Monitoring Process

The Research, Evaluation, Audit and Monitoring program supports the Representative in meeting her responsibility to monitor and evaluate designated child and youth services for the purpose of making recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of those services. The Representative reports publicly on these activities, including issuing reports on the implementation of recommendations.

The work of the Monitoring program is carried out in three ways:

- *Research and Evaluation:* undertaking evidence-based research, including collaboration with other independent bodies and research institutions, to better understand the immediate and long-term outcomes of children and youth.
- *Review and Audit:* conducting province-wide reviews and audits to assess the effectiveness and responsiveness of programs and services to children, youth and their families. Activities include measuring compliance with standards, policies and legislation; gauging the adequacy of ministry quality assurance activities; and determining whether the needs of children and families are being met.
- *Oversight:* monitoring government's activities and its performance in providing designated services to children, youth and their families. Government activities are assessed against evidence-based research and best practice with a focus on understanding how well government sets and achieves stated goals. Additionally, the Monitoring team tracks key issues brought to the attention of the Representative and determines government's progress towards addressing those issues.

In undertaking any Monitoring project, the Representative's primary goal is to be able to contribute to a better understanding of the issues at hand and to make recommendations that will improve service delivery and results in the areas of safety, health, education and well-being for vulnerable children and youth.

Summary of Activities in 2013/14

Monitoring and Special Reports in 2013/14

April 9, 2013 – *Still Waiting: First-hand Experiences with Youth Mental Health Services in B.C.*

In response to concerns from the public about the responsiveness of mental health services for young people, the Representative conducted a review of the youth mental health system in B.C. The review considered the delivery of services through the eyes of the people who receive them – the youth dealing with mental health problems and their families – as well as the people who provide those services. The report identified a fractured mental health system for youth that is confusing and frustrating to navigate. The Representative found that there were significant gaps in the continuum of mental health services available to young people – specifically, there was a marked lack of specialized emergency care, suitable acute care, and community-based, intensive intermediate care across the

province. In addition, there was poor transitioning from youth mental health services to adult services and a lack of communication, coordination and planning between service providers.

The Representative recommended that the provincial government implement a Minister of State for Youth Mental Health to provide leadership and a single point of accountability for mental health services to young people. Other key recommendations included the development and implementation of a full continuum of mental health services for youth ages 16 to 24 and a robust system of quality assurance to ensure appropriate monitoring of services and performance accountability through public reporting.

Nov. 6, 2013, Special Report – *When Talk Trumped Service: A Decade of Lost Opportunity for Aboriginal Children and Youth in B.C.*

This special report on Aboriginal child welfare in B.C. was based on a detailed analysis of the major change initiatives pursued by the B.C. government since 2001 and the effect of those initiatives on direct services to Aboriginal children, youth and their families. The report found that despite significant expenditures by MCFD over this period on Aboriginal child welfare governance and service-delivery discussions and projects, there was no concrete evidence that these initiatives improved services or outcomes for Aboriginal children or families.

Recommendations in this report focused on closing the significant outcomes gaps for Aboriginal children and youth in the province. The Representative recommended that MCFD take responsibility for developing a cross-ministry plan to close this gap and that it begin to report publicly on a semi-annual basis on the safety, health and well-being of all Aboriginal children receiving its services, either directly or through a DAA. The Representative also recommended that the Attorney General take the lead on the development of an explicit policy for any future negotiation of jurisdictional transfer of authority over Aboriginal child welfare.

On-going Monitoring and Analysis of Critical Issues and Areas of Oversight

Integrated Case Management System

The Representative continues to monitor the Integrated Case Management (ICM) system for child protection services. In July 2013, 16 months after the implementation of ICM in April 2012, the Representative conducted follow-up meetings with MCFD staff to determine whether staff's original concerns that children were being put at risk due to the difficulties with recording and finding data within ICM had been addressed. Perspectives from MCFD staff indicated that many of the original concerns had not been adequately addressed, and new problems had since been identified with the ICM system. These findings were shared with MCFD's deputy minister and the Representative reiterated her concern that children were being put at risk.

ICM is an ongoing priority for the Representative, and the Office will continue to request updates on its implementation and closely monitor the provincial government's progress on this initiative.

MCFD Quality Assurance System Enhancements

MCFD is in the process of implementing its re-designed quality assurance program for three areas of oversight: case review and complaints, audits and practice support, and reportable circumstances. The Representative is closely monitoring the implementation of the changes to its case practice audit program including a new audit program for resource and adoptions files.

Planning for Children and Youth in Care

MCFD has a responsibility to ensure that children and youth in care have meaningful assessment and planning that supports their overall well-being. The Representative continues to monitor the ministry's commitment to meeting 100 per cent compliance in completing and reviewing care plans for all children in care.

MCFD Child and Youth Safety and Family Support Policies

MCFD implemented new Child Protection Response Policies in April 2012, replacing the previous Child and Family Development Service Standards (2003). The April 2012 policies were being reviewed and re-developed by the ministry in 2013/14. The Representative will continue to monitor the policy changes and their impact on practice and ICM implementation.

MCFD Supporting Continuum of Out-of-Care Placement Options

As of February 2013, the former standard regarding Informal Kinship Care was replaced by seven new policies, including a new permanency option. The Representative continues to monitor the implementation of these new policies, including their impact on the Extended Family Program and Out of Care caseloads.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2014/2015 and 2015/16

Tuition Waivers for Youth in Care

In the spring of 2013, the Representative challenged the province's post-secondary institutions to waive tuition fees for youth who had been in care of the province under a CCO. Vancouver Island University was the first post-secondary institution to meet that challenge, followed by the University of British Columbia. The Representative continues to collaborate with educators and business leaders to find new supporters for funding the education of youth who have been in government care.

Youth Transitions to Adulthood

The Representative in 2013/14 was finishing a review of the needs of B.C. youth as they leave government care. The review examined the transitional process for young people who have been in care and the issues they face in moving from adolescence to adulthood. The review also considered and assessed the government financial supports available for young people transitioning out of care.

Review of MCFD Adoption Services

The Representative in 2013/14 was completing a review of MCFD's adoption program, with particular attention to the issue of timeliness in achieving adoption placements. This review included an extensive two-part study that followed a cohort of 450 children waiting to be adopted over a six-year period. The first part tracked MCFD's success in moving these children to adoption and the second part of the study examined the ministry's performance in recruiting, assessing and approving adoptive families.

Growing Up in B.C. II

The Representative and the Provincial Health Officer continue to work on a follow-up report to their joint 2010 report *Growing Up in B.C.* The follow-up report, scheduled for release in 2014/15, updates information from the initial report and describes how young people in B.C. are faring in key areas of their lives. The report will focus on understanding how the experiences and outcomes of vulnerable child populations, such as children in care of government, differ from that of children in the general population, and will also delve more deeply into the learning experiences of young people.

Monitoring the Implementation of Past Recommendations

As part of its Monitoring function, the Office is preparing a report that examines government's responsiveness to the Representative's recommendations since January 2008.

The majority of the Representative's reports contain recommendations focused at improving the child- and youth-serving system and outcomes for children and youth. The recommendations provide a roadmap for tracking progress as well as a stimulus for debate and critical analysis. Although it is recognized that different approaches may sometimes be required than those originally recommended, it is the Representative's hope that the issues being raised in these reports will be addressed, raising public awareness and resulting in change and improvements for vulnerable children and youth.

MCFD and DAA Staffing Practices Review

The Representative is undertaking a review of current MCFD and DAA staffing practices related to social workers providing child safety; family, youth and children in care services; and the potential impact staffing practices have on workers' ability to meet their statutory obligations under the *CFCS Act*. This review is being undertaken in response to concerns raised by numerous social workers across the province about chronic staffing shortages, recruitment lags and significant backlog of work impacting the child welfare system.

Advocacy

Advocacy Support to Children, Youth, Young Adults and Their Families

Understanding and navigating the system of available supports can be overwhelming and challenging. Concerns about available services or the delivery of services may arise. It is the responsibility of the Representative's Advocacy team to support and advocate on behalf of these individuals in having their concerns heard and addressed.

The Advocacy team provides a range of services to support children, youth, young adults and their families. The team responds to requests for help and provides information, support and advice in dealing with the province's child- and youth-serving system. Staff encourage and support self-advocacy and work with child- and youth-serving organizations to ensure that the views and opinions of children, youth and young adults are not only sought, but meaningfully heard and considered on issues that affect them. Where needed and circumstances warrant, Advocacy staff will advocate directly on behalf of a child, youth or a young adult.

11,761 advocacy cases opened since 2007

The Advocacy team regularly receives queries from individuals who are seeking help with issues that are outside the Office's mandate. Advocacy staff provide information and referrals to relevant resources in an effort to ensure that vulnerable children, youth, young adults and their families are supported in addressing their concerns.

Case Profile: Addressing Complex Needs

Issue

A 16-year-old youth had mental health needs that were too complex for the parents to safely manage at home on their own. After the youth stabilized in a youth psychiatric hospital for several months, MCFD discharged the youth to a foster placement on a Voluntary Care Agreement (VCA). However, the foster caregiver was not provided with the behavioural tools or training to successfully support this youth's very specific needs. The youth desperately wanted to return home, was in significant emotional distress and exhibited rapidly escalating extreme behaviours. The family was very worried, but could not secure supports to care for their child at home.

Action

An advocate from the Representative's Office facilitated the sharing of information and encouraged discussion among all the parties to plan how to meet this youth's best interests in both the short- and long-term, while also respecting the youth's wishes to be with family.

Outcome

It was decided that the supports available to the youth, family and caregivers under a Special Needs Care Agreement (SNA) were more appropriate than a VCA. The youth was placed under an SNA in a more appropriate staffed residence, but not living at home still caused distress. Finally, after another admission to hospital and further advocacy support from the Representative's Office to coordinate services to the family, the youth was able to move back home, supported by the At-Home program.

Systemic Advocacy

In the course of her work, the Representative may become aware of recurring concerns that are possibly reflective of a larger issue within the overall child- and youth-serving system. When this occurs, the Representative engages in conversations with senior government officials to raise awareness of the over-arching issue and advocates for resolution to the problems.

The Office has established a systemic advocacy team to support the Representative's role in informing government decision-makers about issues and trends that affect the lives of children and youth receiving reviewable and designated services. The systemic advocacy team is made up of individuals from the four program areas and operates with the goal to identify and track issues and trends observed in the Representative's work. The team identifies and analyzes emergent issues and themes arising from individual advocacy cases, correspondence received by the Monitoring team, and the investigation of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth brought to the attention of the Representative.

Case Profile: Timely Planning

Issue

A two-year-old First Nations child was in care under a temporary care order (TCO) since birth. Planning had not taken place within the appropriate time frames. The child had not been properly assessed, nor was there a culturally appropriate plan of care. Placement with an extended family member was explored but the DAA could not find any family members either willing or able to provide long-term care for the child. The lengthy TCO and lack of a plan of care resulted in the foster parent contacting the Representative on behalf of the child.

Action

Advocacy staff contacted the social worker and team leader regarding planning for the child. Upon contact, the Representative's Office learned that a new social worker had been assigned the file and the DAA had made a commitment to make this child's planning a priority.

Outcome

The social worker re-engaged with the child's family through a Sacred Circle to discuss planning. This resulted in the DAA applying for a CCO with ongoing work with the family and the band to find a permanent home. Cultural engagement began and the plan of care was completed.

Summary of Activities in 2013/14

Expansion of Mandate

Effective Sept. 30, 2013, the Representative's Advocacy mandate was expanded to include young adults, up to their 24th birthday, who are eligible for services from Community Living BC (CLBC). This ensures that a particularly vulnerable group of young adults now have access to advocacy services from the Representative during their transition from the youth-serving system to adult supports and services offered through CLBC. Under this new mandate, an estimated 3,800 young adults are now eligible for advocacy services.

To announce and celebrate the start of this new mandate, the Representative hosted a launch event on Sept. 30, 2013 at a community centre in Vancouver, attended by staff members from CLBC, members of the SSCCY, representatives from advocacy organizations and youth and young adults with special needs. The Office also posted advertisements in local newspapers throughout the province to raise awareness of the Representative's Office and inform the public about the changes to the Representative's mandate.

Case Profile: Supporting a Youth's Transition to CLBC

Issue

The parents of an 18-year-old youth contacted the Representative's Office after they had moved their child, who has developmental disabilities, back home from a staffed resource due to serious concerns about the quality of care being provided. Once back home, MCFD told the parents that there would be no further supports until the youth turned 19 and was then eligible for services from CLBC. No transition planning supports were offered by MCFD.

Action

The Representative's position on behalf of this youth was that MCFD had the responsibility to find another resource for the youth as the placement had quality of care issues. The Representative's staff held discussions with MCFD and CLBC regarding working together to find or develop a common resource that could support the youth past age 19, in order to facilitate a seamless transition.

Outcome

MCFD created a resource and collaborated with CLBC to transfer the resource from MCFD to CLBC when the youth turned 19.

Operational Activities

In preparation for the Representative's expanded mandate and to better serve youth transitioning to adult services, the Advocacy staff was divided into two sub-teams: one serving children and youth under the age of 16, and the other serving youth and young adults from age 16 to their 24th birthday. To meet the operational needs of the new mandate, the Office hired a new director for youth and young adults, three youth and young adult advocates (one located in each of the three Representative's offices), and an intake analyst.

Operationally, the Representative's Office renewed its Advocacy policies and procedures, implemented changes to its management system, developed an Advocacy protocol with CLBC and worked closely with CLBC to develop a coordinated system of services to clients. The expansion of the Office's work to include this new service stream was guided by an external advisory group comprised of members of the public and not-for-profit stakeholders and leaders in the community living field. Additionally, CLBC hosted a two-day training forum to educate the Representative's staff about its philosophy, services, policies and procedures.

Case Profile: Supporting Young Adults in Having their Special Needs Met

Issue

A 22-year-old youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) had been held at the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital (FPH) since the age of 18. The youth was initially incarcerated for a minor incident at a group home and spent most of the past four years in an isolation cell without autism treatment and services (not available in the FPH). Other residents who do not understand autism had assaulted and injured the youth. Neither MCFD nor CLBC developed a transition plan regarding support services as an adult or a return to the community.

Action

The Representative's Advocacy team worked with CLBC to focus on the rights of this young person to live in community rather than in an institution, have appropriate supports, and have a proper transition plan. This included behavioural supports, appropriate housing and programs designed to facilitate a successful transition out of an institutional setting.

Outcome

A behaviour support plan and a detailed transition plan were developed. Community living arrangements, a service provider and in-home supports were identified to enable this young adult to return to the community.

Advocacy Cases and Trends

In fiscal 2013/14, the Representative's Advocacy team dealt with 1,912 cases.

Figure 7 – Total Advocacy Cases 2007/08 to 2013/14

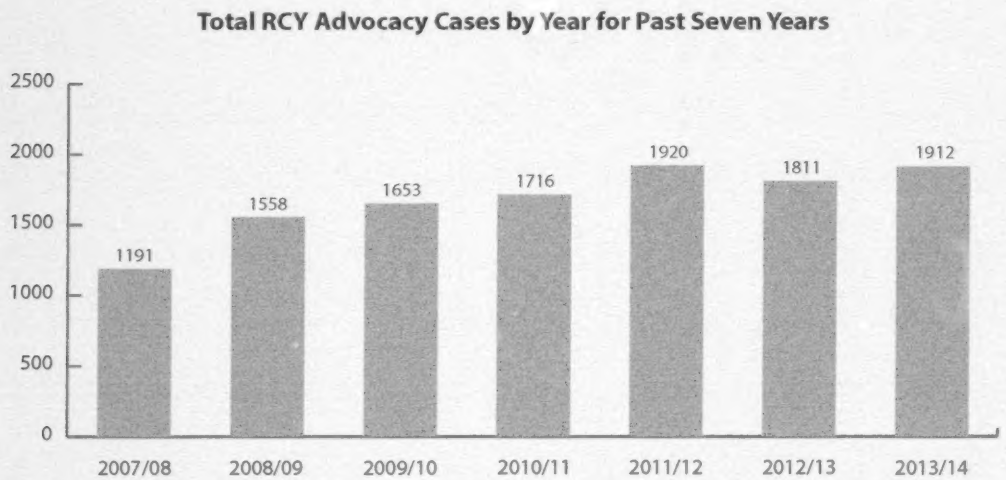
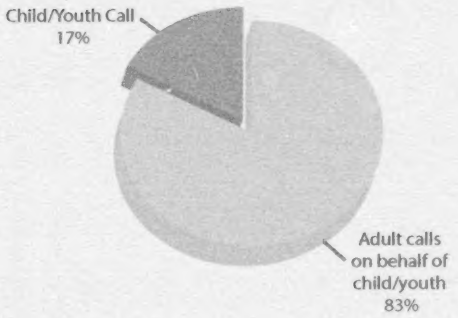
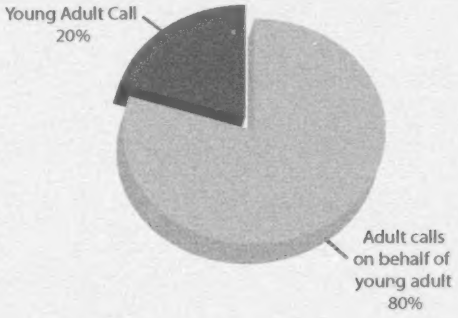


Figure 8 – Advocacy Cases by Initial Contact – 2013/14

RCY Child/Youth Advocacy Cases by Type of Caller, Fiscal Year 2013/14



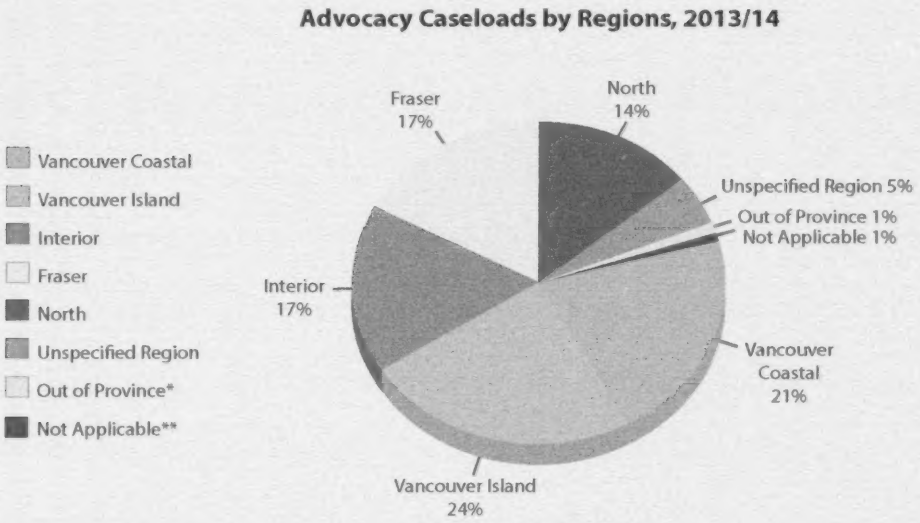
RCY Young Adult Advocacy Cases by Type of Caller, Fiscal Year 2013/14



Note:
Figures for Young Adult and Adult for Young Adult only capture those cases opened between Sept. 30, 2013 and March 31, 2014.

Figure 9 shows the regional breakdown of advocacy cases across the province. The Advocacy caseload is roughly proportional to the child and youth population by region, except for the Northern region, which accounts for about 23.7 per cent of B.C.'s child and youth population but only 14 per cent of advocacy cases. Continuing efforts are being made to raise awareness for children, youth and their families who live in the Northern region about the Representative's advocacy services (the percentage of advocacy cases from the Northern region rose from 12 per cent to 14 per cent between 2012/13 and 2013/14). Included in this chart of young adult advocacy cases from the beginning of the Representative's new mandate on Sept. 30, 2013, to the end of the fiscal year.

Figure 9 – Advocacy Caseloads by Regions – 2013/14



* Out of Province includes Out of Province, Out of Country, or Province Wide.
** Not Applicable means an advocacy case that is not related to an MCFD or CLBC region.

Advocacy Activities

Youth Survey Project

In January 2013, the Representative implemented a youth survey pilot project to determine if a youth survey was an effective tool for obtaining feedback from youth ages 12 to 19 who have used the services of the Office. Links to the survey were e-mailed, texted or hand-delivered to youth in the custody centres. The response rate to the pilot survey was very low, indicating that a survey approach was not the most effective tool for gaining input from youth and the survey pilot was discontinued. The Representative is now considering other strategies for obtaining feedback from youth to inform and improve services. In the interim, youth ages 16 to 19 who have received advocacy services are being interviewed through a telephone survey administered by an independent contractor.

Case Profile: Ensuring Youth Voices are Heard and Needs Met

Issue

A sibling group contacted the Representative with concerns regarding their file being transferred from MCFD to a certain DAA as per standard practice. The siblings and their supporters were concerned about the transfer due to past trauma in their community and the DAA's location in relation to these traumatic incidents. In addition, the DAA had been involved with some visits that occurred between the children and certain family members that unfortunately resulted in further trauma for the children. The children wanted to receive services from a different DAA with which they had a connection through various voluntary support services. With two DAAs and MCFD, the children were confused about who their worker should be. There also seemed to be a lack of support services, as well as insufficient collaborative planning among the parties.

Action

The Representative's Advocacy staff gathered information from the DAAs and MCFD to clarify their roles and responsibilities. Advocacy staff spoke with the children's social worker as well as MCFD provincial office staff regarding how the children's views and needs would be considered in service provision and planning.

Outcome

All parties agreed to keep the file with MCFD and the children continued to receive support from the DAA with which they were comfortable. The file would be transferred to the appropriate DAA when the children were in agreement with this and the issues of trauma were more manageable for them. MCFD and the two DAAs agreed to meet regularly with the First Nations band as well to ensure solid collaborative planning and a continued child-centred approach. The children were relieved to know that they could continue to engage with the service providers with whom they were comfortable while working on healing and reconciliation with their home community and DAA.

Work with Youth Custody Centres

During 2013/14, advocates held monthly sessions at each of the youth custody centres located in Prince George, Burnaby and Victoria. In Prince George, advocates met privately with 11 youth and advocated for four individual youth. The Prince George centre hosted the Representative's Advocacy team in facilitating two child rights workshops and providing an information session to new centre staff as part of their orientation and training.

In Burnaby, advocates met with 37 youth and advocated for eight individual youth. The Burnaby centre hosted a community resource fair, five child rights sessions, an information session for management staff and a meeting with Child and Youth Mental Health staff facilitated by Advocacy staff.

In Victoria, Advocacy staff met privately with 17 youth and advocated for seven individual youth. Advocacy staff also attended an event hosted by the Victoria Youth Custody Centre, where community members helped to re-draft the Youth Custody Services' vision, mission and principles.

In addition to individual meetings with youth, advocates in Prince George and Victoria regularly visited the centres to provide information about the services available and how youth could connect with the Representative's Office.

Case Profile: Supporting a Youth's Best Interests

Issue

A foster parent was seeking to adopt a youth they had been fostering, but did not pass the home study process. This was a difficult time for the family and the child, as they did not understand why MCFD would not allow the adoption to proceed.

Action

The youth felt unheard and contacted the Representative's Advocacy staff. Advocacy staff inquired as to how MCFD was taking the youth's views into consideration in the decision-making process. MCFD attempted to mitigate the identified concerns with the family and some time was given for the family to work through the issues.

Outcome

The process resulted in the foster home being closed and the youth was placed with an alternative caregiver with the end goal of adoption. The potential adoptive parent had been a previous caregiver of the youth. Advocacy staff were able to support the youth through this process. They also ensured that the youth was involved and fully informed as to why this decision had to be made. Although this was not what the youth initially wanted, a more inclusive process ensured a better understanding of the concerns. The youth came to be in agreement with adoption by the alternative caregiver.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2014/15 to 2015/16

To ensure continuous quality improvement, the Representative is applying the BC Public Service "lean" process improvement approach to streamline its communication practices and to maximize its responsiveness to children, youth, young adults and their families requesting advocacy support. Activities include a careful review of Advocacy policies and procedures, review of case management systems, and routine file audits.

To address systemic concerns that come to the attention of the Representative, the Advocacy management team will report three times per year to MCFD, CLBC and the 23 DAAs about the common issues, themes and concerns that come to the attention of the Advocacy team, and to review cases of concern with the intent of making policy and practice enhancements.

In the fall of 2014, a resumption of the monthly national teleconferences with other provincial/territorial child and youth advocates' offices will focus on collaborating on advocacy approaches and best practices, innovative youth participation initiatives, key systemic issues and trends throughout each province, and effective outreach efforts.

Community Relations and Outreach

In 2013/14, the Representative continued efforts to raise awareness about the rights of children and youth and the services that the Representative's Office offers to children, youth, young adults and their families.

Summary of Activities in 2013/14

Operational Activities

To support community relations and outreach activities and to respond more effectively, consistently and in a timely way to requests for the Representative or her staff to attend or participate in events, the position of a community relations coordinator was established in 2013/14. The Office developed an outreach strategy and undertook a range of community relations and outreach activities to raise the profile and increase awareness of the Representative and the services of her Office, to inform British Columbians about the Representative's new mandate, and to build relationships with child- and youth-serving agencies including MCFD, CLBC and DAAs.

Community Outreach

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The Representative and her staff were involved in a wide range of community events and outreach activities including:

- participating in meetings and holding information sessions with government agencies and community child- and youth-serving organizations,
- facilitating child and youth rights workshops,
- attending community events,
- attending and presenting at conferences and other relevant forums, and
- hosting information booths to distribute information and materials and meet and talk to stakeholders and the public.

In addition to participation and attendance at events and activities, the Representative's Office mailed information packages to the following organizations and offices during the period of this report:

- B.C.'s 25 Aboriginal Friendship Centres
- Constituency offices of the 85 Members of the Legislative Assembly
- 117 municipalities across the province.

Online outreach also continued through active use of Facebook, YouTube and Twitter accounts, and the launch of a youth-focused @RCYBCyouth Twitter account.

Community Relations Tour

In addition to participation and involvement in ongoing community events and activities, the Representative's Office undertook a community relations tour between January and March 2014. The purpose of the tour was to connect with organizations that work with children, youth and young adults eligible for the Representative's advocacy services.

Office staff met with MCFD, CLBC, DAAs and MLAs, as well as youth organizations and alternative schools. The goal was to reach communities that:

- had a high demand for advocacy services (based on call volume),
- had not yet been visited by the Representative' Office, and
- had a large number of children in care.

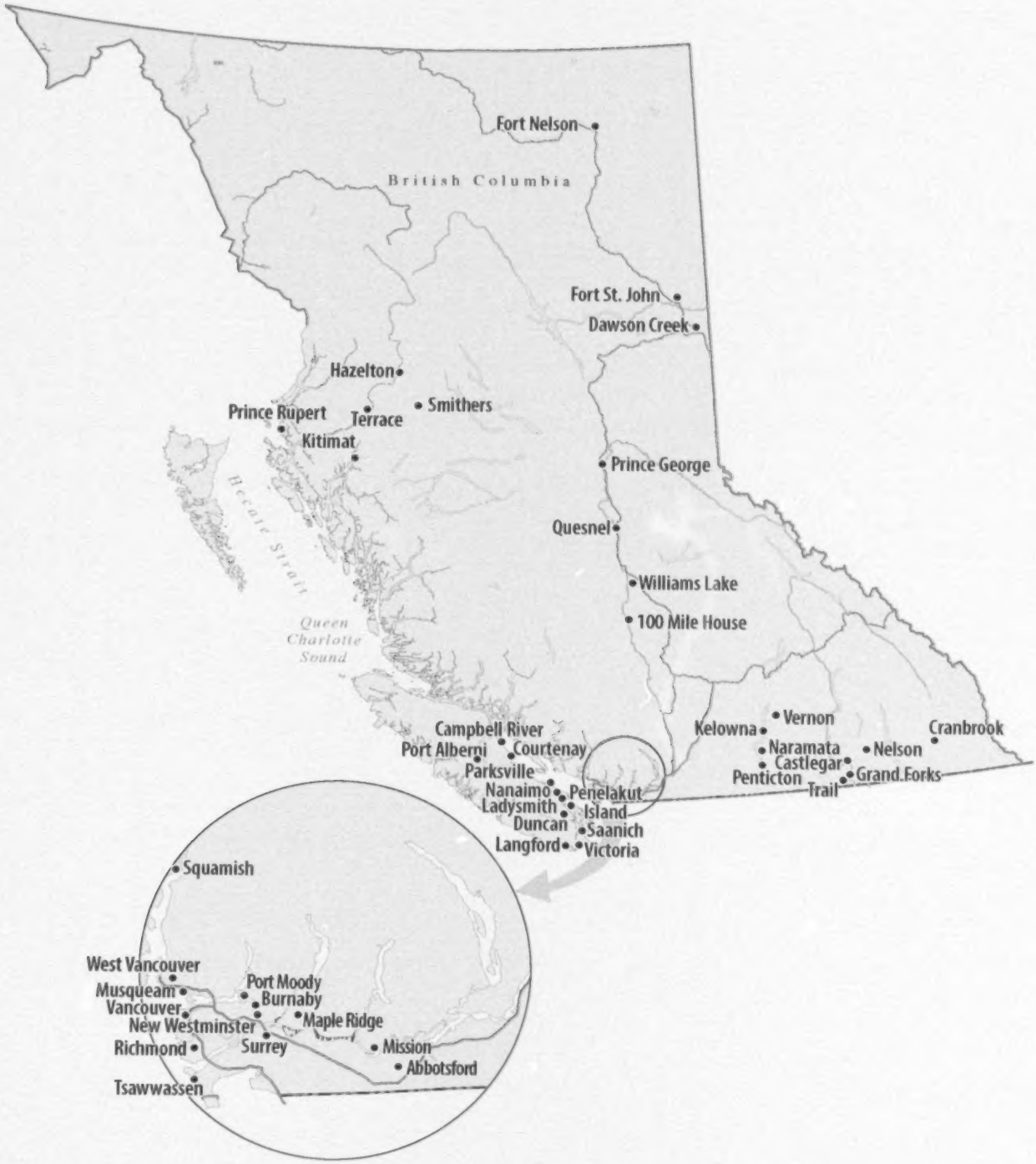
Over the three-month tour, Representative's staff visited 25 communities, met with 627 adults and facilitated child and youth rights workshops for more than 100 young people.

Evaluation findings indicated that participants appreciated the opportunity to build relationships with staff of the Representative's Office and felt that they had gained a better understanding of what the Representative does, and how and who the Representative can help.

The map of B.C. on the following page shows the communities visited by the Representative's Office in 2013/14 both as part of its ongoing advocacy and community outreach and its community relations tour. Over the course of the year, the Representative's Office visited 52 communities.

Appendix 1 is a list of outreach activities undertaken by the Representative's Office in 2013/14.

Communities visited by RCY in 2013/14



Child and Youth Rights Initiatives

Child and Youth Rights Workshops

During 2013/14, child and youth rights workshops were held in six communities as part of the community relations tour. More than 100 youth participated in workshops educating them about their rights, how to speak up and be heard, and how to be self-advocates.

In the fall of 2013, a comprehensive redesign of the Representative's child and youth rights workshops was undertaken to make the workshop materials more youth friendly. Work is continuing with the ultimate goal of having an online resource library available to advocates, including community advocates, to create workshops and activities tailored to children, youth or young adults.

Child Rights Campaign

The Society for Children and Youth of BC, in partnership with Representative's Office, the BC Centre for Safe Schools and Communities, and Reel Youth, continues to lead the Childs Rights Awareness Campaign to promote greater understanding in B.C. of children's rights. In 2013/14, new educational materials on children's rights were developed, improvements were made to the campaign website, and membership in the child rights network increased (the network now has more than 4,000 members including elected officials, child-serving organizations and professionals, media outlets and parents). Core materials have been translated and are available in simplified Chinese (standardized Chinese characters officially used in China), Tagalog, Punjabi, French, Vietnamese and Korean. Public awareness of children's rights has continued to grow with increased uptake of campaign materials by child- and youth-serving professionals and organizations. More than 10,000 posters, postcards and frequently asked questions pamphlets were distributed and 412 public transit ads were posted during a four-week period in November 2013 to coincide with National Child Day.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2014/15 and 2015/16

The focus of community relations and outreach activities for the 2014/15 to 2015/16 period will continue to be on increasing the number of face-to-face meetings with children, youth and young adults and their direct service organizations in order to build awareness of children's rights and the Representative's services. A key priority will be to meet with Aboriginal children and youth served by the 23 DAAs through a provincial tour.

Communications

Summary of Activities in 2013/14

Awards of Excellence

To recognize and encourage excellence in B.C.'s child- and youth-serving system, the Representative held an Awards of Excellence ceremony on Sept. 26, 2013 at Government House in Victoria. The Representative's Awards have honoured and acknowledged individuals and organizations whose work contributed to improving the lives of children and youth in B.C. The recipients of the 2013 Awards of Excellence were:

- Advocacy – Rick Moore, parent advocate
- Cultural Heritage and Diversity – Nella Nelson, member of the Tsawataineuk Band of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation
- Service Provider – Steve Arnett and Nanaimo Youth Services Association
- Innovative Services (co-winners) – Body Works and the Brain Project: Cultural Transition Services, Burnaby School District; and Career Path Program: PLEA Community Services Society in Partnership with MCFD Youth Justice
- Youth Leadership – the 479 youth facilitators and five staff who worked on the Beyond the Hurt program of the Canadian Red Cross Bullying Prevention of British Columbia
- Lifetime Achievement – Charles "Chuck" Fraser.

Champions for Children and Youth 2013 B.C. Summit

On April 24 and 25, 2013, the Representative partnered with the Canadian Red Cross and the Child Welfare League of Canada to host the Champions for Children and Youth B.C. Summit, the first ever North American conference to focus specifically on keeping kids safe and connected in their communities. More than 300 delegates and speakers, including many young people, explored ways that communities can best keep children out of harm's way and connected to positive experiences and people where they live.

Media Requests

The Representative and staff responded to more than 220 requests from the media for interviews and information throughout the year. These requests covered wide-ranging topics including mental health, domestic violence, high-profile issues involving children and youth, the ICM system, reports issued by the Representative, and changes to the *RCY Act*.

Website and Social Media

A more responsive website for the Representative's Office was designed for launch in the summer of 2014 to make the Office's services, information and news easily accessible on mobile devices and to include assistive technology for those individuals with special needs.

In addition, use of social media by the Representative's Office was also reviewed and updated through creation of a Social Media Working Group. The group, with representation from across the organization, developed and refined guidelines and best practices for staff using social media.

Through the year, the use of social media by the Office expanded, including the addition of an Instagram account and continued use of Twitter and Facebook to promote media appearances, statements and public events held by the Representative's Office and other child- and youth-serving organizations.

Public Appearances

The Representative's Office continued to respond to requests for the Representative and her staff to speak at events and for the Representative's Office to hold information sessions and have a presence at important conferences and community events. Information packages, presentations, materials, community relations request forms and evaluation tools are to be upgraded to support an effective communications and community relations strategy.

Speaking Up on Issues of Importance to Children and Youth

The Representative continues to speak up publicly and provide input on issues of national and global significance. In 2013/14, these issues included:

- July 4, 2013 – the Representative's letter to the federal Minister for Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism regarding the importance of Settlement Workers in Schools and other programs for immigrant and refugee youth.
- Nov. 20, 2013 – the Representative's announcement celebrating National Child Day, a date commemorating Canada's adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as more than just a day of recognition but also an important reminder of the role everyone has to play in protecting the rights of children.
- Dec. 18, 2013 – the Representative's statement about the coming into force of the *Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act*. The Representative acknowledged this as a welcome step toward addressing the safety and security of First Nations women and children who live on-reserve in Canada by enabling the court to issue emergency protection orders and remove violent partners from family homes on-reserve.
- Feb. 13, 2014 – the Representative appeared as a witness to the Parliament of Canada's Special Committee on Violence against Aboriginal Women.
- March 3, 2014 – the Representative met with Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette regarding the repeal of s. 43 of the Criminal Code permitting corporal punishment for children.

Youth Engagement

The rights, needs and interests of children and youth are the central consideration of the Representative's work. To effectively meet her mandate, the Representative reaches out to children, youth and young adults to raise awareness about the advocacy services that the Representative offers, as well as to build an understanding in young people about their rights, empower them to speak out for themselves, and hear directly from them about how services and programs can best meet their needs.

Summary of Activities in 2013/14

Operational Activities

In spring 2013, the Representative implemented a youth engagement strategy designed to achieve the following four goals:

1. Establish meaningful working partnerships with youth and young adult leaders to assist in the ongoing development and support of the Representative's youth engagement initiatives across all program areas.
2. Raise awareness about the Representative's mandate and advocacy services for children, youth and young adults throughout B.C.
3. Build capacity and empower children, youth and young people to understand their fundamental rights and the principles of self-advocacy.
4. Develop an online presence using various forms of social media to engage with young people about their rights and views respecting the Representative's designated and prescribed services.

This strategy guides the Office's efforts in ensuring the active participation and meaningful engagement of children, youth and young adults. In summer 2013, a youth engagement coordinator was hired to lead implementation of the strategy. Staff of the Representative's Office also received youth-focused training and professional development. In fall 2013, the youth engagement coordinator and community relations coordinator attended an intensive two-day training session on facilitating youth engagement and, in winter 2013, all Advocacy staff participated in rights-based knowledge training and best practices for sharing this information with young people and their adult allies.

Youth-Focused Communication

In fall 2013, the Office undertook a comprehensive review and refresh of community relations materials to ensure that materials were current and met the needs of youth and, in particular, young adults as new clients of the Representative's Office. In 2014, work commenced on the development of a mobile application to support the Representative's advocacy services. The goals of the Rep4Rights app are to promote engagement and rights awareness, increase knowledge about the Representative's advocacy service, enhance self-advocacy skills among youth and young adults and provide a convenient way for this group to access the Representative's Office.

Youth-Focused Community Relations Events

A priority of the Office is to connect with young people directly. In 2013/14, the Representative and her staff participated in several events and initiatives to support this priority:

- The Representative's Office provided a strong voice at the Youth Forum of the four-day national Truth and Reconciliation event in September 2013. Staff participated in the youth panel and the Advocacy team hosted an exhibition booth distributing more than 2,500 pieces of material on youth rights and the Representative's mandate and services to the more than 5,000 youth attending the event.
- As part of the Representative's community relations tour, staff facilitated six pilots of the renewed child and youth rights workshop, involving more than 100 youth, and established relationships with youth and several youth organizations in remote communities.
- The Representative's youth engagement coordinator was master of ceremonies at the four-day Gathering Our Voices Youth Conference held in March 2014 in Vancouver. This is the largest Aboriginal youth conference in Canada with more than 1,800 youth participants. The Representative's staff also facilitated two child and youth rights workshops as part of the conference and hosted a display booth connecting with more than 500 Aboriginal young people and distributing more than 300 pieces of educational material.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2014/15 and 2015/16

Over the 2014/15 to 2015/16 period, the Representative's Office will continue to implement its youth engagement strategy and connect directly with youth. Priority activities include:

- The delivery of 1- to 1½-day youth empowerment sessions across the province to be undertaken in collaboration with key stakeholders intended to educate and empower young people in care or receiving services. This youth-focused campaign will target the 23 DAAs located across the Province.
- Establishment of a youth advisory committee to provide information, advice and a youth perspective to all programs and services of the Representative's Office. The youth advisory committee is to be comprised of a diverse group of young people from across the province.
- Implementation of the Rep4Rights app to support the planned youth empowerment sessions and to put advocacy tips in the hands of youth.

Aboriginal Relations

Outreach to and engagement with Aboriginal communities is a key priority of the Representative. The Representative and her staff seek out every opportunity to engage, collaborate and establish partnerships with Aboriginal communities to deliver outreach and advocacy services and to support initiatives that improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and youth. In doing this work, the Office strives to respect the unique sense of place, culture, language and rights of Aboriginal peoples.

The Office also collaborates with provincial, federal and Aboriginal governments and leaders in addressing issues related to Aboriginal children and youth receiving government services given the distinct jurisdictional boundaries and service delivery for those living on- and off-reserve.

Summary of Activities in 2013/14

Highlights of activities and initiatives undertaken by the Representative's Office in 2013/14 to engage with and obtain the input of Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal child- and youth-serving organizations on services provided by the Representative and on improvement to programs for Aboriginal children and youth and their families, include:

- working with DAAs to develop an Advocacy protocol to enhance the working relationship and streamline communications between the Representative and agencies;
- the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Métis Nation of B.C. in the fall of 2013 to establish the foundation for a joint dialogue and advocacy process regarding general and systemic issues relating to the safety and well-being of Métis children and youth in B.C.; and
- ongoing outreach with Aboriginal stakeholders, including attending two regional meetings with the Vancouver Island Agency Partnership in Port Alberni and Northern Chiefs Child Welfare Council in Prince George.

In the winter of 2014, all staff of the Representative's Office began to participate in the Indigenous Cultural Competency Training program hosted by the Provincial Health Services Authority to support staff capacity to work respectfully and meaningfully with Aboriginal children, youth and their families as well as Aboriginal leaders. The Representative's staff also took part in National Aboriginal Day events hosted at Trout Lake in Vancouver, Kwumut'Lelum in Nanaimo and in Quesnel and Prince George.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2014/15 and 2015/16

Strategic initiatives underway and planned to promote engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal communities and organizations about issues of importance to Aboriginal children, youth and their families include:

- finalizing and signing an Advocacy protocol with DAAs (planned for fall 2014);
- undertaking a provincial tour of all 23 DAAs to promote youth engagement (discussed in the Community Relations and Outreach section);
- continuing to work with the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) to realize the goals outlined in the 2011 memorandum of understanding between FNESC and the Representative. A strategic focus of the coming year is to ensure that all Aboriginal students with special needs have in place an Individual Education Plan, to advocate for a review of students with special needs who have not been re-assessed in the last five years, and to increase the number of Aboriginal students who obtain the Dogwood certificate;

- continuing to build on the Aboriginal outreach strategy, ensuring the Representative has the opportunity to meet with First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal communities and organizations across the province, both on- and off-reserve. The focus of the Aboriginal outreach strategy in the coming year is on communities in the Northeast and Northwest regions of the province and communities in the Lower Mainland;
- initiating quarterly meetings with the BC First Nations Health Authority to understand the status of progress in establishing services and programs for Aboriginal children and families; and
- developing a plan to review and monitor the quality of services provided to Aboriginal children and families across the province.

The Representative's Office also plans to initiate quarterly meetings with representatives from AANDC to discuss key issues related to developing and implementing the Enhanced Prevention Framework funding approach to child and family services on-reserve in B.C. As well, in fall 2014, the Office will host an Aboriginal youth intern under the BC Public Service Aboriginal Youth Internship Program.

Corporate Services

The Office requires the trust and confidence of the Legislature, the public and stakeholders to be effective in meeting its mandate. Trust and confidence in the Office is enhanced through quality service delivery.

Quality service delivery is achieved through a competent and professional staff supported by efficient operations and organizational infrastructure. The Representative's staff members are highly qualified and supported in pursuing continuing professional development. The Office's operational practices and processes meet or exceed government-wide standards.

Summary of Activities in 2013/14

In 2013/14, in addition to its ongoing services to support the Representative's program areas, Corporate Services:

- enhanced information security through the revision of information security-related policies, implementation of an information incident response process, and provision of internal information security presentations to all staff and refreshed security related resource materials on the Representative's Office intranet website;
- completed the planning phase for the government's workstation refresh project to replace current hardware and software as part of a three-year cycle;
- finished implementation of modifications to the Office's case management system to support the expansion of the Office's mandate and systemic advocacy efforts and activities;
- initiated the "RCY University," an organization-wide staff training program with regular sessions on topics suggested by staff relevant to the work of the Representative's Office; and
- coordinated the registration of all staff in the Indigenous Cultural Competency Training program.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2014/15 and 2015/16

During 2014/15, Corporate Services will complete and begin a number of strategic initiatives to support program operations:

- finishing the workstation refresh project to ensure that staff have access to current tools and technologies (target completion May 2014)
- supporting Communications in the redesign of the Representative's public website (target completion July 2014)
- supporting development and implementation of the Rep4Rights app (target completion September 2014)
- coordinating and supporting the Aboriginal youth intern position that the Office was selected to host under the BC Public Service Aboriginal Youth Internship Program.

Our Performance

The Office measures its performance in achieving its outcomes of relevance, responsiveness, accountability and excellence by tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) and associated performance targets. In addition to KPIs, the Office also tracks a number of secondary indicators for each outcome.

The data used by the Office to measure performance comes from three sources: internal management information systems, publicly available reports and third-party survey data.

The Office uses its performance management information to understand how effective its strategies are in terms of meeting its legislated mandate to advocate for children and youth and to provide independent oversight to the child- and youth-serving system. Based on the results, the Office will alter or enhance its strategies and approaches to providing services and delivering programs.

Relevance

Key Performance Indicator

The Representative ensures relevance in meeting her oversight and accountability role by addressing areas of concern within her mandate that are of interest and importance to the Legislature and public. This is measured by the extent to which the work of the Office responds to concerns or matters brought to the attention of the Representative through her oversight activities and liaison and collaboration with public bodies and other stakeholders, illustrating that the Representative is alert to issues, is in touch with the system and stakeholders and reacts accordingly.

For 2013/14, the Office's performance target for relevance was that 40 per cent of work undertaken by the Office (except for its child death and injury review and investigation work) was in response to issues and matters or questions raised or brought to the attention of the Representative by external parties and sources.

In 2013/14, more than 50 per cent of the work of the Office as reflected in public reports, papers, submissions and statements of position was in response to a concern or matter arising from an external party or source.

Other Indicators of Relevance

Other indicators of relevance that the Office tracks include:

- *Public accountability for the review and investigations of critical injuries and deaths* – measured by ensuring the regular preparation and production of public updates every four months outlining the number of reports received, reviews undertaken and cases identified for investigation by the Representative.

  In 2013/14, the Representative issued *Report #18 – Critical Injuries and Deaths Review and Investigation* for the period Jan. 31, 2013 to May 31, 2013, Report #19 for the period June 1, 2013 to Sept. 30, 2013, and Report #20 for the period Oct. 1, 2013 to Jan. 31, 2014.

- *Progress on recommendations* – measured through the ongoing monitoring and tracking of action taken on all recommendations made to public bodies by the Office on suggestions for improvements and enhancements to child- and youth-serving services and programs. Whether or not recommendations are implemented is not in the control of the Representative; progress on recommendations does, however, provide some measure of the Representative's success in influencing public bodies to make improvements.

  As noted earlier, the Representative is preparing a report examining the government's responsiveness to recommendations made by the Representative since 2008.

- *Relevance to the public* – measured by the public's interest in the work of the Office, by tracking the number of times information and resources on the Representative's website are viewed by the public.

  In 2013/14, 27,342 users accessed the Representative's website during 45,179 sessions, for a total of 127,918 page-views. The Representative's new website (target launch in July 2014), will monitor and track more specifically the number of times individual documents and resources are accessed by the public.

- *Relevance to stakeholders* – measured by the percentage of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about the Office, perceive that the Office addresses issues of significance that fall within the Representative's mandate and that the Representative's reports are credible, independent and objective.

  In 2013/14, a second stakeholder awareness survey was undertaken by the Office (the first survey was undertaken in 2012/13). This survey was distributed to organizations and individuals who had some form of contact with the Office and for which the Office had email addresses. Surveys were sent to 608 stakeholders and 158 completed surveys were received.

The survey found that 93 per cent of respondents had "some knowledge" or "knew a great deal" about the Representative's mandate and duties (also 93 per cent for the 2012/13 survey) and 80 per cent or more (same as the 2012/13 survey) reported they were aware of the Representative's three core mandated functions. More than 87 per cent (88 per cent for the 2012/13 survey) felt that the Office addressed issues of significance falling within the Representative's mandate and a significant proportion reported that Representative's reports were independent – 83 per cent (82 per cent for the 2012/13 survey) – and credible – 84 per cent (83 per cent for the 2012/13 survey).

The 2013/14 survey also measured the extent to which the Representative's reports were considered useful and whether the reports made a difference in the lives of B.C.'s vulnerable children and youth. Of the respondents, 76 per cent indicated that the Representative's reports were useful in their work and 77 per cent indicated that the reports made a difference in the lives of B.C.'s vulnerable children and youth.

The Representative's efforts to continue to raise awareness about the services offered by her Office have been enhanced by the positions of community outreach coordinator and youth engagement coordinator (hired in 2013/14).

Responsiveness

Key Performance Indicators

Timely and effective response to requests for assistance and support from vulnerable children, youth and their families, as well as timely and effective review and investigation of incidents of critical injury or death are essential for the Representative to meet her mandate. The responsiveness of the Representative in meeting her mandate is measured by two key indicators:

1. the percentage of cases in which the Office responds to requests for advocacy services within the established three-day response timeline, and
2. the percentage of screening and review of reports of child and youth critical injuries or deaths that are completed by the Office within the established two-month timeframe.

The Office's performance target for responding to advocacy requests for service within the three-day time limit is 100 per cent. In 2013/14, the Office responded to 98 per cent of calls within three business days (1,886 out of 1,916 total calls). For 2014/15, the performance target is again 100 per cent.

For 2013/14, the Office met its performance target for screening and reviewing reports of child and youth critical injuries or deaths within the two-month target timeframe. For 2014/15, the performance target is again 100 per cent.

Other Indicators of Responsiveness

Other indicators of responsiveness that the Office tracks include:

- *Responsiveness to advocacy calls* – measured by the percentage of youth requests for service responded to within 24 hours. The goal is to ensure that all youth in contact with the Office receive an initial response to their request for service within this period.

  In 2013/14, 99 per cent, or 296 out of 298 youth calls, were responded to within 24 hours; 93 per cent of calls were responded to on the day they were received.

  Another measure of responsiveness is the percentage of those served who rate their satisfaction with the response time as satisfactory or better. The goal is to ensure that all requests for service are dealt with in a timely way. The target rate for satisfaction with response time is 75 per cent. A survey undertaken for the 2013/14 fiscal year found that 73 per cent of clients (70 per cent in 2012/13) reported that they were satisfied with the amount of time it took to respond to their inquiry.

- *Community relations and stakeholder engagement* – measured by tracking the number of appearances or presentations by Office staff at stakeholder and community events, the number of community relations and engagement activities and the number of communities visited with the goal of ensuring that the Representative is engaging and reaching out to children, youth and their families and stakeholders across the province.

  In 2013/14, the Representative and her staff participated in more than 200 community outreach and engagement activities. This included participating in 15 community and stakeholder events and conferences, attending meetings with 143 organizations (including 19 CLBC and 21 MCFD offices and programs located throughout the province), and undertaking 50 speaking engagements.

- *Youth participation* – measured by the number of interactions and engagement activities with youth to raise awareness about their rights and the services of the Office. The goal is to steadily increase the awareness of youth and young adults through increased events and interactions. In 2013/14, the Representative's Office facilitated rights and advocacy workshops throughout the province with more than 125 young people.

- *Aboriginal relations* – measured by the number of collaborative efforts or initiatives with Aboriginal communities and organizations on mutually identified issues of shared concern.

  In 2013/14, the Representative and her staff met with 42 Aboriginal organizations and individual First Nations, had 11 speaking engagements and participated in five Aboriginal conferences and events.

Accountability

Key Performance Indicator

A key outcome for the Representative is to be accountable to the Legislature and British Columbians for the work of her Office. A broad measure of how the Office demonstrates its accountability is the number of reports and papers released and the number of public comments and statements (including media releases and media interviews) each year by the Representative.

In 2013/14, it was expected that the Representative would release up to five reports and papers and a number of other public comments, statements and submissions dependent on emerging issues. In the past year, the Representative released seven reports or papers (including the periodic critical injuries and death review and investigation reports) and eight submissions and statements of recognition or position and responded to more than 220 media requests. In 2014/15, the target is again that the Representative will issue five reports or papers and make other statements and submissions in response to developments.

Other Indicators of Accountability

Another indicator of accountability is the number of times the Representative makes presentations to the SSCCY.

In 2013/14, the Representative appeared before SSCCY five times and presented on reports she had previously released, including the *2012/2013 Annual Report and 2013/2014 to 2014/15 Service Plan* (which the SSCCY is legislatively mandated to review). At each of these meetings, the Representative also provided updates on the work of her Office, and discussed general issues of concern.

Excellence

Key Performance Indicator

Excellence in service delivery is achieved and maintained through competent and skilled staff. A key indicator of the Office's achievement of excellence is the level and degree of ongoing professional development to ensure that staff stay current and up-to-date on emerging issues and trends, expand their knowledge and skills base and promote their own personal development.

For 2013/14, the target was that 85 per cent of permanent, full- and part-time staff would participate in professional development. The Office exceeded this target, as 97 per cent of staff participated in professional development.

Notable examples of professional development undertaken by Office staff include:

- the registration of all staff in the Indigenous Cultural Competency Training (100 per cent of staff have registered for the training and target date for completion was June 30, 2014);
- the participation of two staff in the 2013 International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child in Moncton, N.B.;
- the participation of the youth engagement coordinator and the community relations coordinator in Equitas' two-day training on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- the participation by the Advocacy staff in a half-day child's rights session hosted jointly by Equitas and staff of the Representative;
- the participation of Advocacy staff in the University of British Columbia, School of Social Work Summer Institute 2013: Youth Transitions, a five-day working session bringing together academics, students, policy-makers and practitioners from a number of countries, disciplines and service systems to promote discussion on how to best serve vulnerable young people as they make the often difficult transition into independence and adulthood;
- under the RCY University initiative, all staff participated in the first two sessions: an overview of the "lean" continuous improvement philosophy and approach currently used government-wide and a presentation on bullying, sexual orientation, and human rights; and
- one staff member was trained to facilitate the standard two-day Occupational Health and Safety Committee training for public sector organizations.

Two all-staff meetings were also held, in June 2013 and December 2013, that included a range of knowledge building and professional development topics such as an orientation to CLBC; a presentation about the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; a presentation by RespectEd, a Canadian Red Cross education program on violence, bullying and abuse prevention; an overview of the Representative's new youth engagement strategy; and a session on interpreting and understanding data and statistics.

As well, in September 2013, the Representative hosted the biennial National Conference of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA). The conference brought together representatives from the 10 CCCYA offices to network, share information and hear from keynote speaker Shawn Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and sessions on both youth justice and new case law related to child advocacy.

For 2014/15, the target is that 95 per cent of permanent full- and part-time staff will participate in professional development. The ultimate goal is that all permanent staff engage in some form of professional development each year.

Other Indicators of Excellence

Other indicators of excellence that the Office tracks include:

- *Staff contribution to meeting mandate* – measured by the degree to which staff feel engaged in their work and that they contribute significantly to the achievement of the Office's mandate.

  In 2013/14, the Office undertook its second staff contribution survey, evaluating measures related to the staff's view of their contribution to meeting the mandate of the Office. The survey results are being analyzed and reviewed with staff. Staff input will be considered in developing actions to further enhance staff engagement and sense of contribution to achieving the Office's mandate.

- *Health, safety and well-being of staff* – measured through addressing any health and safety matters immediately and effectively in compliance with occupational health and safety laws and to meet the needs of staff and ongoing support for and facilitation of activities and programs to support staff well-being.

  There were no major safety incidents reported in 2013/14. To facilitate earthquake awareness and preparedness, all three offices participated in the Great British Columbia Shakeout, an event that encourages organizations to review and update emergency preparedness plans and supplies, and to secure office space in order to prevent damage and injuries.

- *Ongoing compliance with core policies* – measured through Office policies and procedures adhering to applicable core government policies, standards and practices and the Office meeting budgeting and audit standards and requirements.

  In 2013/14, the Office again successfully completed its annual financial audit in full compliance with core government policies, standards and practices.

OVERVIEW – Office of the Representative for Children and Youth Strategic Performance Measurement Framework						
Mandate	**Values and Principles**	**Immediate Outcomes**	**Key Performance Indicators**	**2013/14 target**	**2013/14 result**	**2014/15 target**
Representative for Children and Youth Act	*Principles:* • Independence • Accountability • Child-centred *Values:* • Respect • Integrity • Critical thinking • Collaboration	Relevance	Percentage of work undertaken by the Office in response to external oversight, issues raised, matters brought to the Office's attention, or questions from MLAs, the public and stakeholders	40 per cent	50 per cent	40 per cent
		Responsiveness	Percentage of cases in which the Office responds to requests for advocacy services within the established three-day response timeline	100 per cent	99 per cent	100 per cent
			Percentage of screening and review of reports of child and youth critical injury or deaths reported to the Office that are completed by the Office within established two-month timeframe	100 per cent	100 per cent	100 per cent
		Accountability	Number of reports released by Representative	5 reports	7 reports	5 reports
		Excellence	Percentage of permanent, full- and part-time staff who participate in professional development activities	85 per cent	97 per cent	95 per cent

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Representative for Children and Youth, Province of British Columbia

I have audited the accompanying statement of expenditures of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth ("the entity"), for the year ended March 31, 2014, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information (together "the financial statement").

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statement

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of this financial statement in accordance with government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual described in Note 2, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on this financial statement based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statement. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statement, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statement in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statement.

In my view, the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statement of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth for the year ended March 31, 2014, is prepared in all material respects, in accordance with government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual.

Basis of Accounting

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 2 to the financial statement, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statement is prepared to provide information to the Province of British Columbia. As a result, the statement may not be suitable for another purpose.

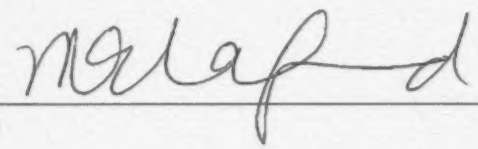
Victoria, British Columbia
August 26, 2014

Russ Jones, MBA, CA
Auditor General

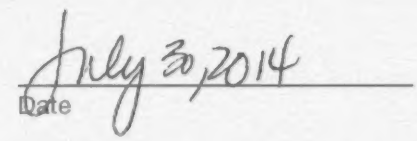
Fiscal Year 2013/2014 Statement of Expenditures

Expense Type	2013/14 Estimates + Contingency Approval $	2013/14 Actual $	2012/13 Actual $
Salaries of permanent and temporary employees	4,387,000	4,128,613	3,753,349
Employee benefits	1,061,000	995,081	957,256
Travel	222,000	328,511	256,181
Professional services	521,000	630,054	482,690
Information systems	480,000	456,367	409,861
Office and business expenses	411,000	439,545	347,557
Utilities, materials and supplies	26,000	22,422	23,701
Operating equipment and vehicles	10,000	5,607	3,251
Amortization	52,000	46,269	65,034
Building occupancy	738,000	644,631	710,927
Transfers – general	5,000	233,000	312,500
Interest costs – non public debt	2,000	147	355
Other expenses	2,000	841	707
Recoveries	0	(15,196)	0
Total Expenses	**7,917,000**	**7,915,892**	**7,323,369**

Approved on behalf of the Office:



Signature



Date

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the statement of expenditures.

1. Nature of Operations

The Representative for Children and Youth is an Officer of the Legislature of British Columbia appointed under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* upon unanimous recommendation of a special committee. The Representative must be appointed for a term of five years and may be reappointed one additional five year term. The Representative meets with the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth to present an Annual Report and Service Plan, and to present reports on the work of the Office in three areas mandated under the *Act*:

- Advocacy – providing information, advice and assistance to children and youth and their families and to young adults and their families who need help dealing with designated or prescribed services or programs provided or funded by government, and promoting and facilitating the development of advocacy services within communities.

- Monitoring – undertaking research, review, evaluation and audit of government funded services and programs to identify and make recommendations for change to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of these services.

- Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations – conducting reviews and undertaking investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services to identify and make recommendations for improvements to services to prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.

Funding for the operation of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (the Office) comes from a voted appropriation (Vote 9) of the Legislative Assembly.

The Office is exempt from income taxes under the *Income Tax Act*.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

a. Basis of accounting

The statement of expenditures is presented in accordance with the B.C. Government's financial and management policy outlined in the Core Policy and Procedures Manual.

b. Expenses

Expenses are reported on an accrual basis. The cost of all goods consumed and services received during the year is expensed.

Transfers include entitlements, grants and transfers under shared cost agreements. Grants and transfers are recorded as expenses when the transfer is authorized and eligibility criteria have been met by the recipient.

3. Budgeted figures

Budgeted figures have been provided for comparison purposes and have been derived from the original estimates approved by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. During the fiscal year, two additional approvals were provided for access to contingencies:

- In April 2013 Treasury Board, on recommendation from the Select Standing committee on Finance and Government Services approved $300,000; and,
- In December 2013, the Select Standing Committee approved access to an additional $300,000.

	Estimates	Contingency Approval	Total
Salaries of Permanent & Temporary Staff	3,993,000	394,000	4,387,000
Employee Benefits	963,000	98,000	1,061,000
Travel	206,000	16,000	222,000
Professional Services	499,000	22,000	521,000
Information Systems	448,000	32,000	480,000
Office & Business Expenses	391,000	20,000	411,000
Utilities, Materials & Supplies	26,000	0	26,000
Operating Equipment & Vehicles	10,000	0	10,000
Amortization	52,000	0	52,000
Building Occupancy	720,000	18,000	738,000
Transfers – General	5,000	0	5,000
Interest Costs – Non Public Debt	1,000	1,000	2,000
Other Expenses	3,000	-1,000	2,000
Recoveries	0	0	0
Total Expenses	**7,317,000**	**600,000**	**7,917,000**

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Appendix 1 – List of Outreach and Communication Activities

Community and Stakeholder Events and Conferences

Inclusion BC AGM, Vancouver (May 2013)

National Aboriginal Day Events, Nanaimo, Trout Lake, Quesnel, Prince George (June 2013)

Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates Conference, Victoria (September 2013)

Truth and Reconciliation National Event - Youth Forum, Vancouver (September 2013)

Community Living BC Quality of Life Conference, Vancouver (October 2013)

BC School Counsellors Conference, Richmond (October 2013)

FASD Collaboration Roundtable Annual Conference, New Westminster (November 2013)

First Nations Education Steering Committee Conference, Vancouver (December 2013)

Early Years Conference 2014, Vancouver (January 2014)

Annual Early Care and Learning Conference, Surrey (February 2014)

Balancing our Minds: Tools for Youth Wellness, Vancouver (February 2014)

BC Alternate Education Conference, Vancouver (February 2014)

Children: The Heart of the Matter, Surrey (February 2014)

Gathering Our Voices Provincial Aboriginal Youth Conference, Vancouver (March 2014)

Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw Youth Governance Forum, Williams Lake (March 2014)

Meetings

Child- and Youth-Serving Organizations

Advisory Committee on Children and Youth with Special Needs

B.C. Association of Foster Parents

British Columbia Association for Child Development and Intervention

Centre for Child Development

Child Welfare League of Canada

Children's Forum

Comox Valley Youth Project

Coquitlam Teachers' Association

Family Support Institute

Federation of B.C. Youth in Care Networks

Fort Nelson Family Development Society

Fort St. John Child Development Centre

Fort St. John Enrichment Society

Gordon Head Middle School

HIPPY- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

Intersect Youth and Family Services Society

Justice Education Society of BC

Kelty Mental Health Centre

Kitimat Child Development Centre

McCreary Centre Society

Nanaimo Family Resource Programs

Network of Inner City Community Services

Our Place Society

Penticton & District Community Resources Society

Pivot Point Family Growth Centre

Safeteen

Society for Children and Youth of BC

Sophie's Place

The Bridge Youth and Family Services

YWCA Vancouver

Appendix

Aboriginal Leadership/Organizations

BC Assembly of First Nations

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Blueberry River Indian Band

Carrier Sekani Child and Family Services

Cariboo Friendship Centre

Denisiqi Services Society

First Nations Education Steering Committee

First Nations Summit

Fort Nelson First Nation

Fort Nelson Friendship Centre

Gitxsan Child & Family Services

Indigenous Perspectives Society/
Caring for First Nations Children Society

Kitimat Child Development Centre

Knucwentwecw Society

Ktunaxa Nation

Ktunaxa Nation Child & Family Services

Kwumut Lelum Child & Family Services

Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council

Métis Nation BC

Musqueam Safe Home

Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre

Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council

Northern First Nations Child and Family Services

Northwest Inter-Nation Family & Community Services

Northern Rockies Aboriginal Women Society

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Prince George Native Friendship Centre

Quesnel Native Friendship Centre

Sasamans Society

Secwepemc Child and Family Service Society

Shuswap Nation

Snuneymuxw First Nation

Snuneymuxw Child & Family Services

South Island Wellness Society

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Society

Tsawwassen First Nation

Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective

Usma Child & Family Services

Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Vancouver Island Partnership Committee

White Buffalo Aboriginal and Métis Association

Wet'suwet'en Child and Family Services

Government Organizations

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

Advisory Group on Provincial Student Assessment

BC Housing

B.C. Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

B.C. Coroners Service

B.C. Ministry of Children of Family Development

B.C. Ministry of Education

B.C. Ministry of Health

B.C. Ministry of Justice

B.C. Ministry of Social Development

City of Vancouver

City of Vancouver – Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health & Addictions/Task Force on Sexual Exploitation

Public Guardian and Trustee of BC

Public Guardian and Trustee of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services

Saskatchewan Child and Youth Advocate Office

House of Commons Special Committee on Violence Against Aboriginal Women

Provincial Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services

Community Living BC Offices:

- CLBC Youth Transition Fair
- CLBC Vancouver
- CLBC Castlegar
- Kootenay Society for Community Living
- CLBC Dawson Creek
- CLBC Fort St. John
- CLBC Terrace
- CLBC Smithers
- CLBC Headquarters, Vancouver Advocacy training
- CLBC Kamloops
- CLBC Vernon
- CLBC Penticton
- CLBC 100 Mile House/Williams Lake
- CLBC Quesnel
- Fort St. John Association for Community Living
- Campbell River & District Association for Community Living
- Port Alberni Association for Community Living
- Community Living Victoria
- CLBC Fraser Region

MCFD Offices:

- Nelson
- Castlegar
- Salmon Arm
- Dawson Creek
- Trail
- Grand Forks
- Smithers
- Terrace
- Kitimat
- Kamloops
- Vernon
- Williams lake
- 100 Mile House
- Fort St. John
- Kelowna
- Nanaimo
- Quesnel
- Courtenay

MCFD Youth Custody Centres:

- Prince George Youth Custody Centre
- Burnaby Youth Custody Centre
- Victoria Youth Custody Centre

Other

Canadian Red Cross
Canadian Federation of University Women BC
Coast Capital Savings
Community Action Initiative
Ending Violence Association of BC
Federation of Community Social Services of BC
Law Foundation of British Columbia
Vancouver Foundation
Provincial Employees' Association
Atira Women's Resource Society – Imouto Housing
Fort St. John Women's Resource Society
Salvation Army
Vela Housing Society

Speaking Engagements

Child- and Youth-Serving Organizations

Youth Mental Health and Addictions Workshop
BC Federation of Foster Parents
Special Education Parent Network
First CallBC: Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition AGM
Youth Housing Network
McCreary Centre Society AGM
Shuswap Children's Association
Shuswap Family Resource and Referral Centre
The Federation of Community Social Services of BC
Axis Family Resources – Childs Rights Workshop for Foster Parents
Federation of BC Youth In Care
Ray Cam Community Cooperative

Aboriginal Leadership/Organizations

BC Assembly of First Nations
Indigenous Perspectives Society
K-12 FNESC Partners
Kwantlem Le'lum First Nation
Métis Nation BC Annual General Meeting
Northern Chiefs Child Welfare Council Regional Meeting
Northern Shuswap Communities Circles of Protection
Qwi'qwelstom: Sto:lo Nation - Preserving the Voice of our Elders - Justice event
Penelakut Tribe Elders Committee
Circle of Care - Prince George Aboriginal Child and Family Commission
Vancouver Island Agency Directors Partnership Regional Meeting

Government Organizations

B.C. Association of Constituency Assistants
City of Surrey
B.C. Legislative Interns
Prince George Youth Custody Centre – Child Rights

Academic Organizations

University of British Columbia – Youth Transitions Course

University of British Columbia – School of Social Work

Simon Fraser University – Public Policy Program

University of Victoria – School of Social Work

University of Victoria – School of Child and Youth Care

University of Northern BC

Other

BC Elementary School Counsellors

BC Children's Hospital – Department of Psychology

Children's and Women's Health Centre of BC

Vancouver Board of Trade

Community Options Society

2013 Vancouver Human Rights Lecture

2013 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences

Vancouver Foundation – Youth Vital Signs Community Conversation

Salt Spring Forum

Law Foundation of BC

Richmond Addiction Services

Canadian Congress on Criminal Justice

Circle of Care

Provincial Association of Residential & Community Agencies

Central Middle School, School District 61

Maple Ridge SD 42 – Childs Rights Workshop

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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REPRESENTATIVE FOR
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